

THE PARTICLE LE IN CHINESE NARRATIVE DISCOURSE:
AN INTEGRATIVE DESCRIPTION

BY

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KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

BA	Disposal Marker
DE	Subordination Marker
INTERROG	Interrogative Marker
LOC	Locative Marker
M	Measure Word
PART	Particle
ZHE	Concomitative Aspect Marker

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The present study investigates the functions LE serves in Chinese narrative discourse and the various factors that condition native speakers' use of this particle. The perfective verbal suffix -le serves as an explicit morphosyntactic signal for the peak event in a discourse segment. The suffix further serves the function of a realis marker and tends to occur with monosyllabic action/event verbs to recount what (has) happened. In cases where the verbs in a series of clauses are not cohesive enough and/or when a special emphasis is called for on the order of events, -le can also serve as an overt marker of anteriority. The use of -le in narrative discourse is conditioned by several factors, e.g. the style of writing, the use of cohesive ties such as collocation, repetition, and synonymy in the text. Context and the perceptual differences among native speakers also tend to influence the use of -le in narrative discourse.

The sentence-final le serves as a discourse-final particle, marking the end of a discourse unit or the boundary between topical units. The particle occurs most frequently at discourse-final positions where a "change of state" meaning is involved. Discourse-final clauses which serve as a commentary on the main text, however, do not take the le. Other factors which affect the use of le include the presence of discourse-internal ties, the style of writing, and structural parallelism. Contextual information and the variation among native speakers as to what constitutes a discourse unit and what is and what is not of classical flavor also have a great impact on the use of le in narrative discourse.

Many of the factors which condition the use of LE interact and compete with each other. This points to the need of an integrative description of the particle. These conditioning factors are best seen as independent but interacting systems within the framework of Integrative Linguistics, as proposed by Casagrande. Perceptual variation among native speakers regarding whether or not to use LE in a particular context in fact results from the different applications of a common set of principles governing the use of this particle, contingent on each individual speaker's organization of discourse, his perception of the relatedness of the events, and his world knowledge. Perceptual variation of this type is better accounted for in terms of Chu's "Conceptual Dynamism."

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

The particle LE¹ has long attracted the attention of grammarians and linguists working on the language. It has been studied from different perspectives, each focusing on certain aspect(s) of the particle. Chao (1968), for example, provides a quite comprehensive description of the particle within the Structural tradition. In Wang (1965), the first attempt to apply the transformational approach to the study of Mandarin, the syntactic characteristics of the particle are examined with respect to the formation of negative and A-not-A sentences.² A Generative Semantics account of the particle is given in Teng (1973), which provides detailed discussion of the semantic properties of LE. Teng's work was followed by Rohsenow (1978), which is also done within the framework of Generative Semantics. In Spanos (1979), a pragmatic approach based on Grice (1975) and Searle (1975) is proposed in order to account for native speakers' use of the particle. A functional approach is employed in Li and Thompson (1981) to capture the communicative functions of the particle. Furthermore, the

occurrence of LE in written narratives is examined and its functions explored in Andreasen (1981).

Despite such extensive research done in the past two decades, work on LE is far from complete and in terms of language learning, the particle remains one of the most difficult grammatical elements to master in Mandarin Chinese. In general, both the syntactic and semantic properties of the particle have become fairly clear over the years, though disagreements still exist among grammarians and linguists as to what constitutes a better (if not the best) description of this particle.

The syntactic and/or semantic properties of LE alone, however, do not provide a full account of native speakers' use of the particle in discourse. Cases abound where the use of LE is withheld where the semantics and the syntax of the sentence would demand its presence. These cases will be presented and discussed in later chapters. Note that we do not intend to downplay the importance of the syntactic and the semantic criteria in the analysis of LE. Quite on the contrary, we believe that these properties of LE do play a significant role in determining whether or not it should be used in a given context. We do, however, object to treating them as the only relevant factors in the analysis. We feel that going beyond the sentence level to examine the actual occurrence of LE in discourse is the necessary first step towards a better understanding of this particle. Only

after this step is taken can we discover the various factors which interact to affect the use of LE by native speakers of Chinese. Recent research in this direction is seen in Spanos (1979), Li and Thompson (1981), and Andreasen (1981). These works, however, fail to fully examine the interplay between the various conditioning factors which affect native speakers' use of the particle. As a consequence, they do not provide a satisfactory account of how it is actually used, specifically in a narrative discourse. The inadequacy of these studies is shown in Chapter II.

In the remainder of this chapter, we will focus on the traditional account of the particle, which is, in essence, a purely syntactic/semantic analysis confined within the sentence boundaries. Such an analysis, as we will see, does not yield an adequate description of the particle. In fact, some common fallacies regarding its use result precisely from this type of analysis.

1.1 The Perfective Aspect Suffix -Le Versus The Sentence-Final Particle Le

The particle LE in Mandarin has been a constant source of confusion, if not frustration, for students of Chinese as well as grammarians and linguists investigating the language. The confusion arises, first of all, from the need to distinguish between the two homophonous forms of the particle: the perfective suffix -le and the sentence-final le.³ Chao (1968: 246-47) states that

This suffix -le, which is a weakened form of the verb 了 liǎo 'finish' and can be suffixed to it like any other verb, as in 了 了一件事 liǎo-le yíjiàn shì 'have finished a business', should be distinguished from a homophonous particle le, probably a weak form of 来 'come', with various meanings such as 'new situation', 'progress in the story', and so on.

Sentences (1.1) and (1.2) exemplify the occurrence of the suffix -le and the sentence-final le on the sentence level:

- (1.1) Tā xué-le sānnián Zhōngwén.⁴
he study-le three-year Chinese

'He took three years of Chinese.'

- (1.2) Tā huì shuō Zhōngguó huà le.
he can speak China speech le

'He can speak Chinese now.'

These examples show that the suffix -le and the sentence-final le are distinguished syntactically in terms of their respective position in the sentence: -le occurs immediately after the main verb (xué 'study' in (1.1)) whereas le comes at the end of the sentence (as in (1.2)). The suffix -le and the sentence-final le can co-occur in the same sentence, as (1.3) below illustrates:

- (1.3) Tā xué-le sānnián Zhōngwén le.
he study-le three-year Chinese le

'He has taken three years of Chinese.'

In (1.3), le occurs sentence-finally and is separated from the suffix -le by sānnián Zhōngwén 'three years of Chinese,' the predicate complement of the main verb xué 'study' of the sentence. Syntactically speaking, then, the distinction between the suffix -le and the sentence-final le is an

important one in Mandarin. For other dialects of China, a similar distinction is drawn between the forms corresponding to -le and le in Mandarin. The following examples are cited in Chao (1968: 247):

- (1.4) 傷了風了
 shāng-le fēng le.
 catch-le cold le

'(He) has caught a cold.'

- (1.5) 傷 阻 風 咯
 sheung-cox fong lhoh.
 catch-cox cold lhoh

'(He) has caught a cold.'

- (1.6) 傷仔風哉
 sang-z fong ze.
 catch-z cold ze

'(He) has caught a cold.'

The sentences in (1.5) and (1.6) are from the Cantonese and the Wu dialects, respectively, corresponding to the Mandarin version in (1.4). As (1.5) and (1.6) illustrate, the different forms in the Cantonese and the Wu dialects which correspond to the suffix -le and the sentence-final le are pronounced and written differently. Furthermore, as Chao (1968: 247) notes, in Cantonese, as in some other dialects of Chinese, it is possible to have the suffix followed by the particle:

- (1.7) yixkeng xoy-cox lhoh.
 already go-cox lhoh

'(He) has already gone it-has-happened.'

The Mandarin version of (1.7) is (1.8), which, however, is ungrammatical:

- (1.8) *yǐjīng zǒu-le le.
 already go-le le

Chao's explanation is that Mandarin always avoids a repetition of the same syllable by way of haplology: -le le --> -le. That is, the sentence-final le which immediately follows the suffix -le is "absorbed," so to speak, into the suffix -le.

The process of haplology, however, cannot account for all instances where the particle LE occurs sentence-finally and is preceded immediately by the main verb of the sentence. A case in point is (1.9) below:

- (1.9) Tā lái LE.
 he come ?

Is this instance of LE the suffix -le, the sentence-final le, or a haplologized form of the two? Here the syntactic criteria fail: there is no formal signal in (1.9) which enables us to make valid judgments on the status of LE, if the sentence is analyzed as a grammatical unit occurring in isolation.

Indeterminate cases like (1.9) often force the analyst to resort to semantic criteria. That is, if the sentence with LE conveys a "change of state" meaning, then it is identified as the sentence-final le. On the other hand, if the sentence conveys a "perfective" meaning,⁵ then it is recognized as the suffix -le.

While the semantic account usually works in straightforward cases like (1.1) and (1.2), in the case of (1.9), it also fails. In fact, (1.9) admits at least the following interpretations, depending on the context where it occurs: (i) He came (ii) He has come (iii) He comes (regularly), and (iv) He is coming. These different interpretations can in part be distinguished one from the other by the addition of temporal adverbials:

- (1.10) a. Tā (zuótiān) lái LE.
he (yesterday) come LE

'He came (yesterday).'

- b. Tā (yǐjīng) lái LE.
he (already) come LE

'He has (already) come.'

- c. Tā (xiànzài) lái LE.
he (now) come LE

'He comes (regularly).'

- d. Tā (mǎshàng) lái LE.
he (soon) come LE

'He is coming (soon, in a minute).'

The sentences in (1.10) show that the ambiguity in (1.9) can be resolved by using explicit temporal adverbials such as zuótiān 'yesterday,' yǐjīng 'already,' xiànzài 'now,' mǎshàng 'soon.'

In this section we have examined one source of confusion regarding the particle LE, namely, the need to distinguish between its two homophonous forms: the suffix -le and the sentence-final le. This distinction is a

prerequisite to an adequate account of the particle, since the two forms exhibit different syntactic and semantic properties.⁶ The need for such a distinction is further supported by dialectal evidence cited in Chao (1968). The syntactic and the semantic properties alone, however, cannot provide a full description of the occurrence of LE. This is particularly true if the analysis employing these criteria is confined within the sentence boundary. The ambiguity of (1.9) further shows the important role context plays in cases where the syntactic and/or semantic criteria fail to account for a particular instance of the particle LE.

1.2 Common Fallacies About the Particle LE

Traditionally, the particle LE has been described as a marker of "past tense" or "completed action."⁷ This tradition is carried on in the textbook description of the particle, which more often than not confuses rather than reveals the true function of LE. For example, DeFrancis (1963: 187) states that when attached either to the verb or to the sentence, LE denotes "past flavored" actions. A similar description is given in Tewksbury (1967), though more emphasis is given to the "completed action" aspect of the particle. Tewksbury gives the following examples to show that the particle LE "either as a suffix to verbs, or as a sentence final, indicates the completion of the action of the verb, or of the entire predicate" (p. 65).

- (1.11) Zhāng Xiānsheng lái LE.
Zhang Mr. come ?

'Mr. Zhang came/has come.'

- (1.12) Tā gěi wǒ qián LE.
he give I money ?

'He gave/has given me money.'

The particle LE occurs sentence-finally in both (1.11) and (1.12). However, while the occurrence of LE in (1.12) can be unambiguously identified as the sentence-final le (since it is separated from the main verb gěi 'give' by the intervening indirect object wǒ 'I' and direct object qián 'money'), the status of LE in (1.11) is debatable. Sentence (1.11) is parallel in structure to (1.9) discussed above and is therefore potentially ambiguous in many ways. The English translations suggest that Tewksbury identifies the LE in (1.11) as an instance of the suffix -le, which in proper contexts indicates either a past event (Mr. Zhang came) or a "completed action" (Mr. Zhang has come).⁸

Sentence (1.11), however, can be used in the context in which Mr. Zhang has come into the speaker's view but has not actually approached the speaker. In this context, it means 'Mr. Zhang is coming' or 'Here comes Mr. Zhang.' It is apparent that in this reading, the action is neither "past" nor is it already "completed." Furthermore, if it is placed in the (admittedly small but nevertheless) expanded context of (1.13), where it functions as a subordinate temporal clause,

- (1.13) Zhāng Xiānsheng lái-lē, wǒmen jiù chī fàn.
Zhang Mr. come-le we then eat food

'We will eat right after Mr. Zhang arrives.'

neither a "past time" nor a "completed action" interpretation is now applicable, since the event of Mr. Zhang's coming (to the speaker's house) lies some time in the future.

The following sentences, all taken from actual conversational exchanges, further point to the inadequacy of the traditional textbook account of LE:

- (1.14) (Wife to husband who is backing out of the parking space)

Xiǎoxīn bié zhuàng-lē nèiliàng chēzi.
be-careful don't hit-le that-M car

'Look out! Don't back into that car!'

- (1.15) (Mother to her five-year-old son who is suffering from a toothache)

Guāiguāi, chī-lē zhèige yào, jiù bú huì
good-good eat-le this-M pill then not will
tòng lē.
ache le

'Be (a) good (boy)! (If) you take this pill, you won't feel pain any more.'

- (1.16) (Two friends talking about a particular novel)

Nèiběn xiǎoshuō wǒ kàn-lē, kěshì méi kàn wán.
that-M novel I read-le but not read end

'(Concerning) that novel, I did some reading of it. But I haven't finished reading the entire book.'

In (1.14), the speaker is issuing a warning to the driver who is backing out of a parking space. We find the occurrence of the suffix -le after the main verb zhuàng

'hit.' This use of -le, however, neither expresses a past action nor indicates a completed action. In (1.15), the mother is urging her son to take the medicine so as to alleviate the pain. The suffix -le occurs after the verb chī 'eat' in the conditional clause, yet the clause does not pertain to a past time nor does it indicate an action which has been completed at the time of speech.

The LE in the main clause of (1.15) jiù bú tòng le 'then (you) won't feel pain any more' is the sentence-final le. It is worth noting that, contrary to DeFrancis' and Tewksbury's descriptions, this instance of le neither indicates a "past-flavored action" nor expresses a "completed action." The sentence-final le, as we mentioned earlier, indicates a change from one state to another. In (1.15), a(n expected) changed state of (the son's) not feeling the toothache any more is indicated. Similarly, in (1.2), Tā huì shuō Zhōngguó-huà le 'He can speak Chinese now,' the sentence-final le indicates a new state of the person's being able to speak Chinese now as opposed to a previous state in which he was unable to do so. The occurrence of le in (1.10c) and (1.12) can be accounted for in the same manner.

Sentence (1.16) is a particularly interesting example in that it not only serves as a counter-example to the traditional account of the suffix -le as a marker of "completed action" but also reveals an important

characteristics of -le. In (1.16), the speaker is asserting that although he did in fact read the novel (a past event) yet his reading of the novel is not completed. This property of -le was discussed in Chu (1976), who notes that the suffix asserts only "the presupposition of active attempt" without necessarily indicating the result, i.e. the end point of the action expressed by the predicate. The following examples from Chu (p. 48) further illustrate this property of -le:

- (1.17) Wǒ xiě-le yìfēng xìn, kěshì méi(yǒu)
 I write-le one-M letter but not(have)
 xiě wán.
 write finish

'I worked on one letter, but didn't finish it.'

- (1.18) Tā zìshā-le sān cì, (hái) méi sǐ.
 he self-kill-le three times (still) not die

'He attempted suicide three times, but (still) didn't die.'

Our discussion of LE so far points to the inadequacy of the traditional textbook account of the particle. As suggested in the previous section, a distinction needs to be drawn between the suffix -le and the sentence-final le. The sentence-final le does not indicate a past event or a completed action but rather a change from one state to another. It is worth noting that the changed state is distinct from "tense"; i.e., it is not relevant whether the new state of affairs materializes at the time of speech (as in (1.2) and (1.10c)), at a future time (as in (1.15)), or

some past time (as in (1.19) below), as long as it is a changed state.

- (1.19) Wǒ zuótiān jiàndào Zhāng Xiānsheng le.
I yesterday meet Zhang Mr. le

'I met Mr. Zhang yesterday--i.e. I have always wanted to meet Mr. Zhang and yesterday I finally met him.'

Although (1.19) seems to describe an event which was completed in the past, to claim that le indicates a "past event" or a "completed action" is an overgeneralization.

Similarly, the traditional textbook account of -le fails to provide a full description of this verbal suffix. We have examined many cases where -le does not describe a "completed" action (e.g. (1.13)-(1.18)). Furthermore, in examples (1.13)-(1.15), no reference to the past time is indicated. Why, then, is the suffix traditionally described as a marker of "past tense" or "completed action"?

The occurrences of -le in (1.13)-(1.18) suggest that one of the functions of the suffix is to indicate "anteriority";⁹ i.e., one event occurs prior to another. For example, in (1.13) the arrival of Mr. Zhang precedes the event of the family's eating. In other words, the speaker is asserting that they will not (begin to) eat until Mr. Zhang arrives. In the case of (1.14), where only one event is actually narrated, i.e. bié zhuàng-le nàiliàng chēzi 'Don't back into that car!' subsequent event(s) can nevertheless be inferred. A possible event that follows

(1.14) is Fǒzé bǎoxiǎn fèi jiù tí gāo le 'Otherwise, the insurance rate will escalate!'

As a marker of "anteriority," the suffix -le indicates the occurrence of an event prior to another, without necessarily indicating the completion of the action specified in the predicate (as in (1.16)-(1.18)). Furthermore, the "prior" event is independent of "tense": it may take place in the time frame of past (as in (1.16)-(1.18)), present (as in (1.10b)), or future (as in (1.13)-(1.15)). As is well-known, Chinese is a "tenseless" language, i.e. Chinese does not have overt markers of tense affixed to the verb, and most of the task of showing temporal reference, when needed, is done by the use of time adverbials, as the sentences in (1.10) illustrate.¹⁰ In the absence of explicit temporal adverbials or other contextual cues, the speech time, i.e. the moment of utterance of the sentence, is taken to be the reference point.¹¹ Therefore, in (1.1), Tā xué-le sānnián Zhōngwén 'He took three years of Chinese,' the event is interpreted as having taken place in the past time.¹² This explains why -le has traditionally been described as a marker of "past tense." Sentence (1.1) further points to the inadequacy of sentential analysis: treating the sentence in isolation as a self-contained grammatical unit fails to reveal the function of the suffix.

1.3 The "Double-LE" Construction

Our examination of the samples in the preceding two sections shows that the traditional textbook account of LE as a marker of "past tense" or "completed action" does not provide an adequate description of the particle. We have suggested that one of the functions of the suffix -le is to indicate the "anteriority" of one event in relation to another. The sentence-final le, on the other hand, is better treated as a "change of state" particle. Let us now examine the traditional account of the so-called "Double-LE" construction, in which the suffix -le and the sentence-final le co-occur, as in (1.3), repeated below for the sake of convenience:

- (1.3) Tā xué-le sānnián Zhōngwén le.
he study-le three-year Chinese le

'He has taken three years of Chinese (now).'

A typical textbook account of the construction is given in Fenn and Tewksbury (1967: 114):

With verb -le only simple completion at some time in the past is indicated ('once upon a time,' 'once'). With the presence of sentence le, the action of the verb is brought up to the present, marking the completion of a stage in process ('so far,' 'up till now,' 'to date'), with the prospect that there is another stage ahead.

Fenn and Tewksbury seem to suggest that with the addition of the sentence-final le, a "completed" action in the past, i.e. xué-le sānnián Zhōngwén 'took three years of Chinese,' is brought up to the speech time with the implication that the action may continue into the future.¹³

The most obvious problem with their description is that it is self-contradictory. Why should a past "completed action" (marked by the suffix -le) become "continuous" (and thus "incomplete") with the addition of the sentence-final le at the end of the sentence? This in fact strengthens our point that the suffix -le does not indicate a "completed action" but rather serves, in one of its functions, as a marker of "anteriority." As an "anteriority" marker, the suffix -le in (1.3) indicates that the event of having studied three years of Chinese occurred prior to the speech time but leaves open the possibility that the action of studying Chinese still exists at the speech time or will continue into the future.

The particle le at the end of (1.3), as we suggested earlier, serves as a marker of "change of state." It indicates a change from a previous state of, say, not having studied three years of Chinese to having studied three years of Chinese as of the speech time, which is the functionally unmarked reference time. This explains why the double-LE construction is often translated into the English present perfect. Furthermore, as a marker of "change of state," le merely indicates that a new state has emerged as of the speech time (unless indicated otherwise) without specifying how long the state will continue to exist. This is why, in certain contexts, a double-LE sentence such as (1.3) implies

that the action specified by the verb may continue into the future.

Another problem with the traditional treatment of the double-LE construction is seen in (1.20) below:

- (1.20) a. Wǒ yíqǒng shēngqǐng-le wǔ-ge
 I altogether apply-le five-M
 dàxué .24/.12
 college
- b. yǐjīng yǒu sān-ge dāyìng gěi
 already have three-M promise give
 wǒ jiāngxuéjīn .76/.00
 I scholarship

'Altogether I have applied to five colleges. Three have already promised to give me scholarships.'

This sample is one of the test items in Spanos' (1979) survey of the contemporary use of the particle LE.¹⁴ The blanks in (1.20) are the possible positions where the sentence-final le can be inserted. The first figure in the blanks indicates the percentage of respondents obligatorily using le and the second figure, the percentage optionally using it. Let us concentrate on clause (a), which is parallel in structure to the sentence in (1.3) discussed above. Structurally speaking, le can be used in the clause to form a double-LE sentence. As the percentage figures indicate, only 24% of the respondents regarded le obligatory and another 12% considered it optional. This low percentage shows that the traditional treatment of the double-LE construction based on purely sentential analysis does not provide an adequate account of native speakers' use of this

grammatical construction. Postponing our major arguments until later chapters, we simply point out here that the use of the construction involves not only the syntax and semantics of the particle LE but also considerations of the over-all discourse organization.

1.4 Summary and Organization of the Present Study

In the preceding sections we pointed out that the traditional textbook account fails to provide a satisfactory description of the particle LE. Notions such as "completed action" and "past tense" do not reveal the true functions of the particle. After examining the samples in this chapter, we have seen that one of the functions of the suffix -le is to serve as a marker of "anteriority." Furthermore, we have suggested that the sentence-final le be better understood as expressing a "change of state" meaning. These descriptions provide a more accurate account of the particle LE than those given in traditional analysis. The failure of the traditional approach is largely due to the sentential analysis employed by traditional grammarians. A true understanding of the particle, we believe, cannot be achieved by studying its syntactic and semantic properties in sentences taken out of context. We need instead to go beyond the sentence level to examine the actual occurrence of LE in discourse and investigate what the conditioning factors are (syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, discoursal,

perceptual) and how these various factors interact to affect native speakers' use of the particle. In the present study, we also hope to bring together the insights and findings of previous research in order to arrive at an integrated description of the particle.

In what follows, Chapter II presents a critical review of previous works on the particle LE. In Chapter III, the occurrences of the particle in narrative samples are examined and its discourse functions explored. The hypotheses proposed in Chapter III regarding the discourse functions of LE are checked in Chapter IV, where the results of a survey on the contemporary use of the particle are reported. Finally, in Chapter V, the major findings of the present study are summarized and examined in the light of Casagrande (1984a and 1984b) and Chu (1977).

1.5 Notes

1. The capital LE is used here as a cover term for the perfective verbal suffix -le and the sentence-final particle le. It is also used in cases where the two are difficult to differentiate, as in (1.9) below.
2. Wang (1965), however, deals only with the perfective verbal suffix -le. The sentence-final particle le is not discussed. See review of Wang in Section 2.2 in Chapter II.
3. In the present study, these two homophonous forms are differentiated by the presence or absence of a hyphen, i.e. -le for the perfective verbal suffix and le for the sentence-final particle.
4. The samples in the present study are transcribed in the Pinyin system.
5. The term "perfective" is often left undefined in traditional analysis. But it is understood that as a "perfective" suffix, -le indicates a "completed" action or a past event. See discussion of the suffix in Section 1.2.
6. See also Li and Thompson (1981: 185) who state that "any description of the verbal aspect marker -le must begin with the caveat that it is important to keep the perfective aspect distinct from the sentence-final particle le."
7. For example, Brandt (1943) and Pettus (1943) identify LE as a marker of "past tense." In Wang (1947), He (1954), and Kratochvil (1968), the suffix -le is identified as a marker of "completed action."
8. The traditional description of the perfective aspect in Chinese as expressing a "completed action" is in fact quite misleading. In Section 2.1.1 of Chapter II, we will examine the notion of "perfectivity" in greater detail. In this chapter, we will continue to use the phrase "completed action," as it was originally used by traditional grammarians in the description of the particle LE.
9. This "anteriority" use of the suffix -le is closely related to its being a marker of the "perfective" aspect. As Givon (1984: 281-82) points out, "the relation [that ties together "perfectivity" and "anteriority"] pertains to some end point of an

action/event." See further discussion in Section 2.1.1.

10. See also Comrie (1976: 6), who states that although "many languages lack tenses (i.e. do not have grammaticalized time reference), probably all languages can lexicalize time reference, e.g. temporal adverbials."
11. Givon (1984: 273) points out that "the most common universal point of reference is the time of speech, anchored to the speaker at the time of performing the speech act."
12. See also Givon (1984), who states that "the most common category [of tenses] associated with the perfective is the past, because once an event has occurred, its terminal boundary is more likely to be a matter of record, in retrospect" (p. 277).
13. A similar description of the double-LE construction is given in DeFrancis (1963: 188).
14. See Spanos (1979: 60-64).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES OF THE PARTICLE LE IN MANDARIN

In this chapter we present a critical review of the major works on the particle LE in Mandarin. Specifically, we will examine how it is treated by linguists working within different theoretical frameworks. Chao (1968) is generally regarded as the representative of the Structural approach as it is applied to the description of Mandarin Chinese, though, as we will see, Chao's analysis is not confined to a purely distributional analysis of LE. A Generative Transformational approach is adopted in Wang (1965) to account for the syntactic behavior of the perfective suffix -le in three types of Mandarin sentences. Teng (1973) examines LE within the framework generally known as Generative Semantics, analyzing both the suffix -le and the sentence-final le as higher predicates in the underlying structure. Another Generative Semantics account of LE is given in Rohsenow (1978), which treats the particle as representing the co-occurrence in underlying structure of both the atomic predicate COME ABOUT and the existential predicate YOU[✓]. The major difficulty with the above analyses is that they are confined within the sentence boundary and

are thus unable to reveal how LE is actually used in a discourse context. A survey of native speakers' usage of LE was carried out by Spanos and the results of the survey were reported in Spanos (1979), which attempts to provide a pragmatic explanation for the varied uses of LE. A functional description of LE is provided in Li and Thompson (1981), with focus on the total communicative context in which it is used. Their analysis, as we will see, is restricted to short two-sentence texts and fails to reveal the functions of LE in large narrative discourse. Andreasen (1981) bridges the gap by examining actual samples of written narrative fiction from the fourteenth century to the present. His analysis, however, leaves many problems unsolved, particularly with respect to the sentence-final particle le.

2.1 Chao's Structuralist Account

Chao (1968) maintains that a distinction needs to be drawn between the two homophonous forms of the particle LE in Mandarin: the perfective suffix -le and the sentence-final le. The need for such a distinction comes not only from dialectal evidence¹ but also from the different distributional properties of the two variants. Chao (1968: 247) notes that in general the suffix -le is attached to action verbs and does not occur with auxiliary verbs such as néng 'can' or yuànyì 'willing to,' as in

- (2.1) (Tā) chū-le yìběn zázhi.
(he) issue-le one-M magazine

'(He) issued a magazine.'

- (2.2) *Tā néng-le lái.
he can-le come

- (2.3) *Tā yuànyì-le qù.
he willing-le go

The sentence-final le, on the other hand, occurs at the end of the sentence, as (2.4)-(2.6) below illustrate:

- (2.4) Nǐ yí àn ménlíng, tā jiù lái kāi
you once press door-bell he then come open
mén le.
door le

'As soon as you ring the doorbell, he'll come and open the door.'

- (2.5) Zuótiān lěng, jīntiān nuǎnhuó le.
yesterday cold today warm le

'Yesterday was cold, today is/has become warm.'

- (2.6) Zuótiān tā zhēnde kū le.
yesterday he really cry le

'He really cried yesterday.'

These examples show that le admits a noun (mén 'door' in (2.4)), a predicative adjective (nuǎnhuó 'warm' in (2.5)), or an action verb (kū 'cry' in (2.6)) immediately preceding it. The occurrences of le in these cases are identified as the sentence particle simply on the syntactic grounds that they all occur sentence finally.

Although he is generally regarded as the representative of the Structural approach in the description of Mandarin, Chao (1968) goes beyond the purely distributional account of this perplexing particle and discusses the semantic

properties of LE. The suffix -le is described as a marker of perfectivity, and as such occurs in a variety of syntactic constructions. The sentence-final le is claimed to express various meanings such as "new situation," "progress in a story," and so on. In what follows, Section 2.1.1 presents Chao's treatment of the perfective suffix -le and its occurrence in rather diversified constructions. In Section 2.1.2, his analysis of the sentence-final le and the various meanings associated with the particle is presented.

2.1.1 The Perfective Verbal Suffix -Le

Chao (1968) treats the suffix -le as a marker of the perfective aspect, which has "the class meaning of 'completed action'" (p. 246). For example,

- (2.7) Cí-le xíng zài dòngshēn.
take-le leave then depart

'Don't depart without having taken leave.'

Chao holds that in (2.7), with -le affixed to the main verb cí 'take' of the first clause, the action of 'taking leave' must be completed before the action specified by the verb phrase in the second clause, namely 'departing,' can take place.

Chao further lists a variety of constructions in which -le occurs as a marker of perfectivity: (i) in conditional clauses (p. 116), (ii) in temporal clauses (p. 120), (iii) with quantified objects in the past (p. 248), (iv) in verb-resultative complements (p. 439), and (v) with stative verbs

when there is a cognate object (p. 668). These different uses are illustrated, respectively, in (2.8)-(2.12) below:

- (2.8) Tǎng ruò nǐ zǎo jǐng gào-le tāmen, nàicǐ
 if you early warn-le they that-M
 chūshì huòzhě jiù néng bìmiǎn le.
 accident perhaps then can avoid le

'If you had warned them early, that accident perhaps could have been avoided.'

- (2.9) Wǒ chī wán-le nǐ chī.
 I eat-finish-le you eat

'(After) I have eaten, (then) you eat, i.e. Don't eat until I've finished eating.'

- (2.10) Wǒ zuótiān pèng jiàn-le yíge lǎo péngyou,
 I yesterday meet-le one-M old friend
 tā qǐng wǒ chī-le yí dùn fàn.
 he invite I eat-le one-M food

'Yesterday, I met an old friend and he invited me to a dinner.'

- (2.11) Zài děng yíge zhōngtóu, jiù děng nǐ le.²
 again wait one-M hour then wait-tired le

'If (one) waits another hour, (one) will get tired of waiting.'

- (2.12) a. Dà-le sān cùn.
 big-le three-inches

'(X) has grown by three inches.'

- b. Bìng-le yí chǎng.
 ill-le one-M

'(X) has had a seige of illness.'

Chao's treatment of the suffix -le, based on a broad collection of data, is indeed very comprehensive. There are, however, some problems with his analysis that need to be addressed. First of all, while it is essentially correct to identify -le as a marker of the perfective aspect,

claiming that it indicates a "completed action" inevitably runs into some problems. We saw in Chapter I that there are many instances in which the suffix is used, but the action specified in the predicate is not yet completed. A case in point is (2.13), discussed in Section 1.2 and reproduced below for the sake of convenience:

- (2.13) Nèiběn xiǎoshuō wǒ kàn-le, kěshì méi kànwán.
that-M novel I read-le but not read-end

'(Concerning) that novel, I did some reading of it. But I haven't finished reading the entire book.'

In (2.13), the action of reading the novel started sometime in the past, but the action in fact has not been completed as of the time of speech. Thus, to say that -le, as the marker of the perfective aspect, indicates a "completed action" does not provide an adequate account of the notion of perfectivity, since it puts too much emphasis on the end point of the situation described by the perfective. The following quote from Comrie (1976: 18) further points to the inadequacy of Chao's "completed action" interpretation of perfectivity:

The perfective does indeed denote a complete situation, with beginning, middle, and end. The use of "completed," however, puts too much emphasis on the termination of the situation, whereas the use of the perfective puts no more emphasis, necessarily, on the end of a situation, rather all points of the situation are presented as a single whole.

Chao's analysis of -le as a perfective marker denoting a "completed" action, therefore, needs to be modified. The notion of "completed" is at best only one of the possible

meanings of a perfective form, and certainly not its only defining feature. As Comrie (1976: 3) points out, the perfective presents the totality of the situation³ referred to "with beginning, middle, and end rolled into one and no attempt is made to divide the situation up into various individual phases that make up the action of entry." Closely following Comrie, Chu (1983: 4) proposes that -le be identified as a marker of "complete situation" rather than a marker of "completed action." In the case of (2.7), where two events are presented (i.e. cíxíng 'taking leave' and dòngshēn 'departing'), the use of -le after cíxíng indicates that the event of 'taking leave' is a complete one that precedes the other event 'departing.' The use of -le after jǐnggào 'warn' in the conditional clause of (2.9) can be similarly accounted for.

It seems then that using the notions of "complete situation" and "anteriority," we can better characterize the perfective use of -le in Mandarin. The "anteriority" use of the suffix is closely related to its being a marker of the perfective aspect. Comrie gives the following example from English to show that perfective meaning is normally taken to indicate a sequence of events:

- (2.14) The wind tore off the roof, snapped the clothes-line, and brought down the apple tree.

He holds that "since each of the three situations is presented without regard to its internal constituency, a natural interpretation is take them as events that occurred

in succession, each one complete in itself; moreover, they will normally be taken to have occurred in the order in which they are presented in the text"⁴ (p. 5).

Let us now examine (2.9), where the suffix is used after chīwán 'eat-finish; finish eating' in the subordinate temporal clause. This clause is of particular interest in that it contains the resultative verb complement wán 'finish, end, conclude,' which indicates the completion of an action, as in chàngwán 'finish singing,' niànwán 'finish studying.'⁵ If the "completedness" is already signaled by wán in (2.9), the question then arises as to what function -le serves in this sentence? We think that here it serves as an overt marker of "anteriority." That is, with -le suffixed to chīwán, the sequencing of the two events in question is explicitly marked: the second event (i.e. 'your eating') takes place only after the completion (marked by wán) of the first event.

Note that although -le can be used to mark the prior event(s) in a series of events, the temporal sequencing of events in Mandarin does not necessarily require the use of -le, as (2.15) below indicates:

- (2.15) Wǒ chīwán nǐ chī.
I eat-finish you eat

'Don't eat until I have finished eating.'

The sentence in (2.15) suggests that in Mandarin, the sequencing of events is in general marked by the linear ordering of clauses: the event that comes first (linearly)

is usually the one that is temporally prior to (an)other event(s).⁶ This is further illustrated in (2.16), which is semantically equivalent to (2.9) and (2.15):

- (2.16) Wǒ chīwán-le yǐhòu, nǐ zài chī.
I eat-finish-le after you then eat

'Don't eat until I have finished eating.'

The temporal markers yǐhòu 'after' and zài 'then' and the suffix -le, however, are all optional. Omitting these markers does not result in a change of meaning. There is, however, a change in the degree of explicitness. Of the three, (2.15) is the least explicit whereas (2.16) is the most explicit. Sentence (2.9) stands in-between.

Next, let us examine (2.10), which, according to Chao, exemplifies the use of -le with a quantified object in the past time frame. Chao claims that the suffix is "obligatory after a verb for past action if it has a quantified object" (p. 248). This claim, however, is too strong. Compare (2.10) with (2.17) below, an utterance addressed to me by a Chinese friend a couple of days ago:

- (2.17) Wǒ zuótiān pèngjiàn yíge Měiguó-rén,
I yesterday meet one-M American
tā shuō tā shì nǐde xuésheng.
he say he is your student

'I met an American yesterday. He said he was a student of yours.'

The first clause in (2.17) contains the verbal compound pèngjiàn 'meet,' followed by a quantified object: yíge Měiguó-rén 'an American.' What is more, the clause recounts a past event, as shown in the use of the adverbial zuótiān

'yesterday.' Yet, contrary to Chao's claim, -le is not used. This optional (rather than obligatory) use of -le shows very clearly that Chao's claim is not entirely correct. More importantly, it suggests that native speakers may vary with regard to the use of the suffix. This in fact has motivated us to conduct a survey to determine native speakers' use of the suffix -le in a broader context. The survey and its results are reported in Chapter IV.

Let us now examine the sentences in (2.12), where -le is used with the stative verbs dà 'big' and bǐng 'ill,' each followed by a "cognate object" sāncùn 'three inches' and yìchǎng 'a seige (of),' respectively. We notice, first of all, the verbs are monosyllabic. As we will see in Chapter III, monosyllabic verbs in Mandarin tend to occur with the perfective aspect -le to recount past happenings, as in

- (2.18) Wǒ (zuótiān) kàn-le yìchǎng diànyǐng.
I (yesterday) see-le one-M movie

'I saw a movie (yesterday).'

Seen in this way, we do not need to further specify, as Chao does, that -le is used with stative verbs only when the verb is followed by a cognate object. In fact, it is perhaps the use of -le with these verbs that allows them to take a cognate object (Chu, personal communication). In other words, the use of -le in these sentences changes a static situation (as implied by the verbs dà and bǐng) into a dynamic process (dà-le sāncùn) or event (bǐng-le yìchǎng).⁷

Finally, Chao's treatment of LE after děngnì 'wait-tired, tired of waiting' in (2.11) as the suffix -le is problematic. This occurrence of LE is in fact better interpreted as the sentence-final le, since what is signaled in this sentence is essentially a change of state/status. That is, one would become tired (of waiting), if further waiting is required. The sentence-final le is discussed in the next section.

2.1.2 The Sentence-Final Particle Le

Chao (1968: 798-800) points out that the sentence particle le expresses various meanings such as "new situation," "progress in a story," "isolated event in the past," and so on. Examine, for instance, the following examples:

- (2.19) a. Xià yǔ le.
 fall rain le
 'It's raining (now).'
- b. Āiyā, shíyī diǎn bàn le.
 goodness eleven o'clock half le
 'Goodness, it's (as late as) half past eleven.'
- c. Tāng xián le.
 soup salty le
 'The soup is too salty.'
- (2.20) Chī fàn le.
 eat food le
 'Let's eat now.'

- (2.21) Nà fángzi jiù tā le.
that house then collapse le

'Then the house collapsed.'

- (2.22) Wǒ zuótiān dào Zhāngjiā chī fàn le.
I yesterday to Zhang-home eat food le

'I went to the Zhangs' for dinner yesterday.'

- (2.23) Wǒ huí lái le.
I return come le

'I have come back.'

- (2.24) Nà wǒ jiù bù zǒu le.
that I than not leave le

'In that case, I won't leave, then.'

- (2.25) Zhèi-ge nǐ dāngrán dǒng le.
this-M you surely understand le

'This you understand, of course.'

Chao holds that the le's in (2.19) are the inchoative le, which is applied to a new situation, as in (2.19a); or to a situation regarded as a quality or degree attained, as in (2.19b). With adjectives, this inchoative le may imply an excessive degree, as in (2.19c). The le in (2.20) indicates command in response to a new situation. In (2.21) it denotes progress in telling a story. The le in (2.22) expresses an isolated event in the past and is different from the le in (2.23), which reports a completed action as of the present. In (2.24), the le is used in a consequent clause to indicate situation. The le in (2.25) is called the "obviousness" le, corresponding to an upswing of intonation in English.

Chao's analysis of the sentence-final le is both detailed and comprehensive, and his notions such as "new situation," "isolated event in the past," and "completed action as of the present" have had tremendous influence on the textbook description as well as later analyses of le. Although in general we agree with his analysis, we will point out some problems below.

To begin with, the le's in (2.19)-(2.24) can be grouped under one semantic category: "change of state/status," since all these sentences involve a change from one state to another. We believe that this analysis of le as having the class meaning of "change of state/status" achieves more generality than Chao's, and there is no longer any need for further differentiation into the "inchoative" le, the le of "new situation," le of "excessive degree," etc. The use of le to express an "excessive degree" is in fact derived from the general meaning of le as a "change of state/status" marker. That is, the function of le in (2.19c), Tāng xiǎn le 'The soup is too salty' can be seen as expressing a departure from the norm, i.e. a change from the normal state/status. Furthermore, it is misleading to say that le in (2.22) indicates an "isolated event in the past," since not every isolated past event is marked by le. For example, in the following exchange:

(2.26) A: Nǐ zuótiān zài nǎr zhù?
you yesterday at where live

'Where did you stay yesterday?'

B: Wǒ zuótiān zài Zhāngjiā zhù.
I yesterday at Zhang-home live

'I stayed at the Zhangs' yesterday.'

The sentence which Speaker B utters apparently describes an isolated event in the past; however, le is not needed at all. In fact, if we add le at the end of the sentence, it will then mean 'Yesterday, eventually, I stayed at the Zhangs'.' The added le here suggests a happening that was different from a previous or a usual course of action. This then fits the basic general meaning of change of state/status.

We pointed out in Chapter I that the use of le as a "change of state/status" marker is independent of time reference. The temporal frame imposed on sentences containing it is derived from explicit temporal adverbials found in the sentence. The presence of zuótiān 'yesterday' in (2.22) imposes the past (change of state/status) interpretation of the sentence. In the absence of explicit temporal markers, the speech time is taken as the reference time, thus the present (change of state/status) interpretation, as in (2.19), (2.20), (2.23) and (2.24). In the case of (2.21), the time frame in which the collapsing of the house took place is inferred from the context in which the story is narrated.

Chao's treatment of le in (2.25) as the "obviousness" le is also problematic. To illustrate, we find in (2.25) the lexical item dāngrán 'surely, of course,' which already

expresses the "obviousness" meaning. Consequently, it is not clear how Chao assigns the "obviousness" meaning of (2.25) to the particle. In fact, leaving out dāngrán results in an entirely different reading:

- (2.27) Zhèi-ge nǐ dǒng le.
 this-M you understand le

'This you (already) understood/This you understand (now).'

Moreover, a sentence with the "obviousness" reading does not necessarily require le. Observe the non-use of le in the following:

- (2.28) Zhèi-ge wèntí wǒ dāngrán dǒng Ø,
 this-M question I surely understand
 yàoburán tā zěnmó huì wèn wǒ ne.
 or-else he why will ask I PART

'Of course, I understand this question. Or else why would he have asked me?'

The use of the sentence-final le in (2.25), therefore, does not express "obviousness" but rather, we suspect, is needed for discourse reasons. This function of le will be further explored in Chapter III.

To sum up, we have seen that six of the seven meanings Chao has proposed for le can, in fact, be grouped under one category: change of state/status. Furthermore, as the sentence in (2.25) suggests, the occurrence of le cannot be accounted for merely on the basis of sentential analysis but should be examined in larger discourse contexts.

2.2 Wang's Transformational Approach

Wang (1965) examines the syntactic behavior of the perfective aspect suffix -le in three types of Mandarin sentences and proposes that this suffix and the morph -yǒu be identified as suppletive alternants of the same morpheme (p.457). He believes that this analysis would provide a unified account of the relationship among affirmative, negative, and A-not-A sentences in Mandarin.

In Mandarin, a plain sentence, i.e. an affirmative sentence not containing aspect markers, is converted into its negative counterpart by adding the negative marker bù 'not' at the beginning of the predicate, as in

- (2.29) Tā mǎi shū.
he buy book

'He buys books.'

- (2.30) Tā bù mǎi shū.
he not buy book

'He does not buy books.'

A seeming irregularity arises, however, when an affirmative sentence containing an aspect marker such as -le is negated. The negative of (2.31), in which -le is suffixed to the main verb mǎi 'buy,' is not (2.32), but is rather (2.33):

- (2.31) Tā mǎi-le shū.
he buy-le book

'He bought books.'

- (2.32) *Tā bù mǎi-le shū.
he not buy-le book

- (2.33) Tā méi(yǒu) mǎi shū.
he not(have) buy book

'He didn't buy books.'

Sentence (2.33) is of particular interest in that we find in this negated form not only the negative marker méi (instead of the regular negative marker bù) but also an additional yǒu 'have,' which, however, is optional.

To account for this irregularity, Wang first posits in the deep structure an aspect marker of the form -yǒu, the morph méi being the alternant of bù 'not' before this aspect marker. The deep structures of (2.31) and (2.33) are (2.34) and (2.35), respectively:

- (2.34) Tā -yǒu mǎi shū.

- (2.35) Tā bù -yǒu mǎi shū.

In order for (2.34) and (2.35) to be converted into (2.31) and (2.33), the following set of transformational rules, which are ordered with respect to one another, are formulated (p. 459):

- (2.36) a. Change bù into méi (in front of yǒu)
b. Transpose the aspect marker -yǒu (in the non-negative context) to follow the verb mǎi
c. Change the postverbal -yǒu to -le

Wang holds that postulating -yǒu and the perfective -le as alternant forms of the same morpheme further allows us to resolve irregularities observed in A-not-A questions involving aspect markers such as -le.

In an A-not-A question, a special type of disjunctive question in Mandarin, the affirmative predicate precedes the

corresponding negative, as in (2.37) below. If deletion occurs within either one of the predicates, everything is deleted up to the leftmost constituent, as shown in (2.38):

- (2.37) Tā mǎi shū bù mǎi shū?
he buy book not buy book
'Does he (or doesn't he) buy books?'
- (2.38) a. Tā mǎi shū bù mǎi?
b. Tā mǎi bù mǎi shū?

However, when an A-not-A question contains an aspect marker such as -le, irregularities again emerge:

- (2.39) Tā mǎi-le shū méiyǒu mǎi shū?
he buy-le book not-have buy book
'Did he (or didn't he) buy books?'
- (2.40) Tā mǎi-le shū méiyǒu?
he buy-le book not-have
'Did he (or didn't he) buy books?'
- (2.41) Tā yǒu méiyǒu mǎi shū?
he have not-have buy book
'Did he (or didn't he) buy books?'

In (2.40) and (2.41) the regularity observed in plain A-not-A questions, of deleting up to the leftmost member in the verb phrase, is broken. In (2.40), the whole verb phrase mǎi shū 'buy books' is deleted. The greatest difficulty, however, lies in the presence of -yǒu in (2.41), which according to the traditional analysis, never exists in the left verb phrase. To resolve the irregularities, Wang posits the following underlying forms for (2.39)-(2.41), respectively,

- (2.42) a. Tā -yǒu mǎi shū bù -yǒu mǎi shū?
 b. Tā -yǒu mǎi shū bù -yǒu?
 c. Tā -yǒu bù -yǒu mǎi shū?

Note that all the irregularities mentioned above now disappear, since the aspect marker -yǒu is now the leftmost member of the verb phrase. Wang's analysis of -yǒu and -le as alternant forms of the same morpheme thus provides a unified description of the relationship among the affirmative, the negative and the A-not-A sentences in Mandarin.

Wang (1965) is essentially an application of Chomsky's (1957) model of transformational grammar to the analysis of Mandarin Chinese. As such, it has inspired later works done within the generative-transformational framework, such as Hashimoto (1971), Teng (1973), and Su (1973). Wang's analysis of the suffix, however, is not without problems. Teng (1973), to be discussed in the next section, raises the important question as to how extensive the alternation is between the morph -yǒu and the suffix -le. The major problem with Wang's analysis lies in the fact that it examines the suffix only sententially and in a quite mechanical fashion. As a result, it fails to account for the occurrence of this suffix in real discourse context, which, as we will see, involves the interaction of many factors, linguistic and non-linguistic.

2.3 Teng's Generative Semantics Formulation

In Teng (1973), the perfective aspect -le (Lp in Teng's terms) and its homophonous sentence particle le (Li in Teng's terms) are distinguished in terms of their syntactic and semantic characteristics. Syntactically, Lp occurs with non-state verbs whereas Li is in construction with the whole sentence and not with action verbs. Semantically, Lp specifies a given event's being "accomplished," "completed," or "perfected" whereas Li specifies "change of status" or "new situation." Teng further notes that, as far as temporal reference is concerned, Lp relates to the occurrence of a non-generic event at a time before the utterance, hence is incompatible with such time expressions as 'now' and 'often':

- (2.43) Tā zuótiān mǎi-le yìběn shū.
he yesterday buy-le one-M book

'He bought a book yesterday.'

- (2.44) *Tā xiànzài kàn-le shū.
he now read-le book

'*He reads now.'

- (2.45) *Tā chángcháng xiě-le xìn.
he often write-le letter

'*He often wrote letters.'

Li, on the other hand, relates to the occurrence of a change by a given time as specified (as in (2.46) and (2.47)), or, in the absence of a time expression, by the time of the utterance (as in (2.48)):

- (2.46) Tā zuótiān jiù zhīdào nèige xiāoxí le.
 he yesterday then know that-M news le

'He (already) knew that news yesterday.'

- (2.47) Tā xiànzài zhīdào nèige xiāoxí le.
 he now know that-M news le

'He knows that news now.'

- (2.48) Tā zhīdào nèige xiāoxí le.
 he know that-M news le

'He knows that news now.'

Teng argues against Wang's (1965) analysis that Lp and yǒu 'have' are suppletive forms of the perfective aspect. He proposes to treat yǒu as a higher verb, maintaining that "the perfective aspect is not derived in the underlying structure from the existential yǒu but is embedded under it, as are other aspects" (p. 14). Teng's thesis is that identifying -le and yǒu as alternant forms of the same morpheme would lead to the obligatory deletion of -le in non-Lp sentences (i.e. sentences not containing the aspect marker -le). Furthermore, if such an analysis is consistently applied, it would result in ill-formed configurations of aspects. For example, observe the following pair of sentences:

- (2.49) Tā bì-zhe yǎnjīng.
 he close-zhe eye

'He has his eyes closed.'

- (2.50) Tā méi(yǒu) bì-zhe yǎnjīng.
 he not(have) close-zhe eye

'He is/was not having his eyes closed.'

Sentence (2.49) contains what Teng calls the "progressive" or "continuative" marker -zhe.⁸ The negated form of (2.49) is (2.50), which includes méi(yǒu) 'not (have)'. To regularize the syntactic correspondence between affirmative and negative "progressive" sentences, we would be forced, following Wang's analysis, to postulate that -le actually underlies these sentences. But this is hardly a valid analysis. For one thing, the configuration "perfected progressive" is "ill-formed," according to Teng. For another, sentences containing both -le and the -zhe are ungrammatical:

- (2.51) *Tā bì-zhe-le yǎnjīng.
he close-zhe-le eye

Another major problem with Wang's analysis has to do with sentences containing state verbs. As we pointed out, the suffix -le in general does not occur with state verbs, as the ungrammaticality of (2.52) shows:

- (2.52) *Tā néng-le shuōhuà.
he can-le speak

However, we find some instances where state verbs are negated by méi(yǒu) 'not (have)':

- (2.53) Duìbùqǐ, wǒ zuótiān méi néng lái.
sorry I yesterday not can come

'Sorry, I couldn't come yesterday.'

Again, following Wang's analysis, we would have to set up such underlying structures as

- (2.54) *Wǒ zuótiān néng-le lái.
I yesterday can-le come

and then obligatorily delete -le in order to derive the acceptable Wǒ zuótiān néng lái 'I could (have) come yesterday (but . . .).' This analysis, however, violates the general rule in Mandarin that perfective aspect is incompatible with state verbs in general.

To get around the difficulties Wang's analysis entails, Teng proposes to treat yǒu as "a main verb, which takes a sentence as object NP complementation" (p.22). The underlying structures for (2.55) and (2.56) are presented in Figure 1 and Figure 2, respectively,

- (2.55) Tā mǎi-le zìdiǎn.
he buy-le dictionary
'He bought a dictionary.'
- (2.56) Tā méiyǒu mǎi zìdiǎn.
he not-have buy dictionary
'He didn't buy a dictionary.'

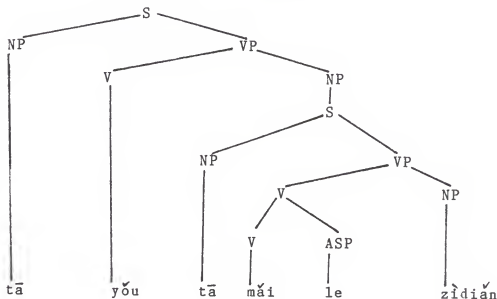


Figure 1

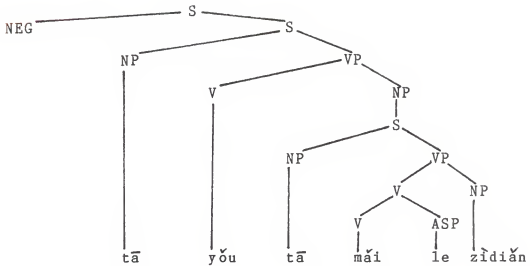


Figure 2

Two transformations are required for (2.55) and (2.56) to be correctly derived. First, yǒu is deleted in affirmative sentences when no disjunctive construction, e.g. A-not-A form, is present. Secondly, -le is generally deleted in negative sentences.

Teng's analysis is based on the framework generally referred to as Generative Semantics. His analysis has inspired later researchers' investigation of the suffix -le (e.g. Rohsenow 1978, to be discussed in the next section). In general, Teng's analysis has greater depth, covering both the syntactic and semantic properties of the suffix. In this respect, it appears more thorough than Wang's.

Another contribution Teng makes in his (1973) article is the inclusion of the sentence-final le in his discussion. Teng holds that a full understanding of the suffix "is not possible without at the same time clarifying the interplay between Lp and Li" (p. 14). Teng's treatment of Li (i.e.

the sentence particle le) departs drastically from the traditional analysis. Li is analyzed as a higher predicate, i.e. an inchoative verb meaning 'come about' or 'come to pass.' Teng holds that this departure from the traditional assumption accounts syntactically for the syntactic irregularities of negative sentences with the particle.

Teng's argument is that should Li be postulated as a sentence particle, a sentence in which it occurs would be expected to be either affirmative or negative. But although we find a pair of sentence such as

- (2.57) Tā yào chū-qù le.
he want out-go le

'He wants to go out now.'

- (2.58) Tā bú(yào) chū-qù le.
he not(want) out-go le

'He doesn't want to go out now.'

we do not find negative sentences in cases where their affirmative counterparts contain Lp, e.g.

- (2.59) Tā chī-le fàn le.
he eat-le food le

'He has eaten (already).'

- (2.60) *Tā méi(yǒu) chī fàn le.
he not(have) eat food le

This discrepancy, Teng argues, could only be accounted for by positing an ad hoc rule as: delete Li when Lp is negated.

Teng claims that (2.58) is not a negation of (2.57) but rather it is a separate assertion with a negative element in it. Both indicate the change from a previous state and are

to be interpreted as (2.61) and (2.62) and respectively represented as in Figure 3 and Figure 4:

(2.61) It has come about [He wants to go out].

(2.62) It has come about [Neg He wants to go out].

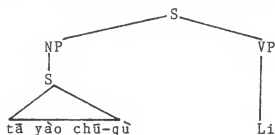


Figure 3

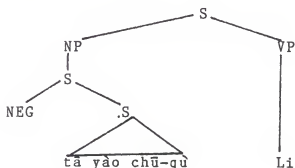


Figure 4

In the same vein, Teng holds that the negative form of (2.59) is actually (2.63) below, whose interpretation is (2.64):

(2.63) Tā hái méi(yǒu) chī fàn.
he yet not(have) eat food

'He hasn't eaten yet.'

(2.64) Neg [It has come about that [He ate]].

But then what is the negative form of (2.57)? Teng's choice is (2.65):

(2.65) Tā hái bú yào chū-qù.
he yet not want out-go

'He doesn't want to go out yet.'

Furthermore, (2.65) is interpreted as

- (2.66) Neg [It has come about that [He wants to go out]].

Teng's analysis is admittedly more thorough than Wang's, covering both the suffix -le and the sentence-final le and examining their interaction with respect to negation. His analysis is well-justified in terms of the framework he adopts. The major problem with his analysis, like that of Wang's, is that it is limited to purely sentential analysis and as such, fails to provide an adequate account of how the particle LE is actually used by native speakers of Chinese in discourse. Below we give a short discourse sample illustrating native speakers' use of the suffix -le:

- (2.67) a. Lǎo Wáng chōngdào Ø ménkǒu
old Wang dash-to doorway
b. yìjiǎo tīkāi Ø dàmén
one-foot kick-open big-door
c. lākāi Ø diàndēng
pull-open light
d. qìchōngchōng de zuò-le xiàláí.
angrily DE sit-le down-come

'Old Wang dashed to the door, kicked the door open with one blow, turned on the light and angrily sat down.'

(Ø indicates the potential slots for the use of the suffix -le.)

Four events are narrated in (2.67). Each clause in this sample represents, in Teng's terms, a "completed" or "perfected" event. Furthermore, the main verb in each clause is non-stative. Therefore, given Teng's semantic and

syntactic criteria, the verbal suffix -le should occur in each individual clause. However, native speakers in general would withhold the use of the suffix in clauses (a)-(c),⁹ as shown in the sample. In fact, using it in each clause renders the passage "choppy." This clearly indicates that to provide an adequate account of native speakers' use of -le, we need to go beyond the sentence level and investigate other factors (discourse, pragmatics) which interact with the syntactic as well as semantic factors.

Furthermore, although Teng stresses the importance of studying the interplay between the suffix -le and the sentence-final le, his discussion is limited only to their interaction in negative sentences. Therefore, given the sample in (1.20), which involves the so-called "Double-LE" construction, the low percentage of le at the end of clause (1.20a) cannot be satisfactorily explained in Teng's analysis.

2.4 Rohsenow's Atomic Predicate Analysis

Rohsenow (1978: 26) proposes that "the two surface instances of LE [the suffix -le and the sentence-final le] are in fact different surface representations of the same underlying operators, which differ in their relative height in the underlying struture." The underlying operators Rohsenow refers to are the universal atomic predicate COME ABOUT and the existential predicate Y[✓]OU. Thus, for a

sentence containing the perfective aspect suffix -le such as (2.68), he posits as its underlying structure the form represented in Figure 5.

(2.68) Tā hē-le chá.
he drink-le tea

'He drank/had drunk tea.'

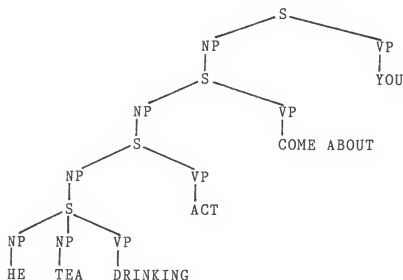


Figure 5

In (2.68), the underlying state DRINKING plus the higher atomic predicate ACT together lexicalize as the action verb hē 'drink.' This action verb is further commanded by the higher predicates COME ABOUT and the existential YŌU which in combination underlie the surface marker -le.

The atomic predicate COME ABOUT is defined as

(2.69) COME ABOUT (p) = def. ~ pNp

That is, the operator COME ABOUT with respect to a proposition p is defined as 'not p and then p.'

As for the existential predicate YŌU, Rohsenow holds, following Teng (1973: 24), that it asserts the existence of an event or state. Furthermore, the effect of predicating

the existential Y^oU over the atomic predicate COME ABOUT (which itself commands an action or state) is to "describe that state or action as having come about" (p. 63).

Rohsenow further notes that the 'coming about' of a state or action while itself an event, serves to create a new state from that state or action's 'having (at some time) come about.' Thus, (2.68) describes a change from a state of not having drunk tea to a new state of having drunk tea (at some unspecified time).

If it is the combination of COME ABOUT commanded by the existential verb Y^oU which is negated, then the semantics of the predication describes the coming about of the state or action as not existing, or not having come about, and the resultant state not existing. The negative form of (2.68) is (2.70), whose underlying form is represented in Figure 5:

(2.70) Tā méi(yǒu) hē chá.
he not(have) drink tea

'He did not drink/had not drunk tea.'

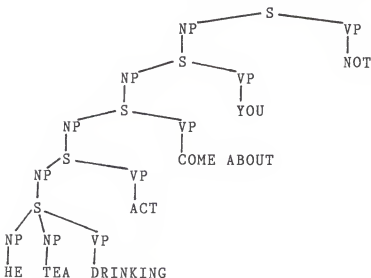


Figure 6

Rohsenow stresses that the surface markers Y^óU (after the negative méi 'not') in (2.70) indicates the presence in the underlying structure of both COME ABOUT plus the higher existential predicate Y^óU, in turn commanded by the negative (which accounts for surface méi).

Rohsenow further suggests that underlying sentences with -le and méi(y^óu) (as in (2.68) and (2.70)), the existential predicate Y^óU operates as a marker of relative anteriority similar to "have" in the English perfect. Moreover, the underlying atomic predicate COME ABOUT can be identified with notions of "aspect" and particularly of "perfective aspect." His arguments are as follows. First, he points out that it is not uncommon to find surface realizations of the universal existential predicate used to assert that a state exists. For example, Chinese surface y^óu, French il y a, Spanish hay, Japanese arimasu, etc. He holds that the existential Y^óU, in command of a subordinate instance of COME ABOUT (which in turn commands an embedded sentence), "expresses the existence of a (new) state of being (having come about) for the state or action commanded by COME ABOUT, thus expressing relative anteriority" (p. 85).

How is the atomic predicate COME ABOUT associated with the notion of "perfectivity"? Rohsenow asserts that if "perfectivity" is characterized in Kirsner and Thompson's (1976) sense as "boundedness" of a state or event, then the

atomic predicate COME ABOUT "predicated of a state or activity expresses the notion of a certain delimited ("bounded") amount of the state or activity taking place" (p. 92).

Rohsenow analyzes sentences containing the sentence-final le as consisting of the operators COME ABOUT plus the existential YOU which together have the remainder of the predicate in their domain. Thus a sentence such as (2.71) has its underlying structure represented in Figure 7.

(2.71) Tā tiāntiān hē chá le.
he everyday drink tea le.

'He drinks tea every day now.'

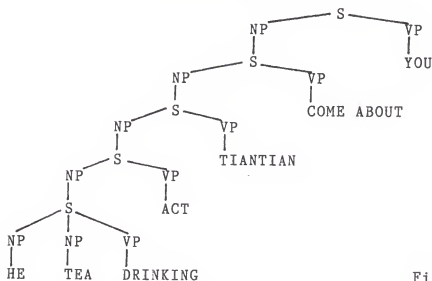


Figure 7

Rohsenow's analysis of LE, like Teng's, adopts the framework generally known as Generative Semantics. However, it differs from Teng's in that it does not identify the underlying atomic predicate COME ABOUT directly with the sentence-final le (i.e. Teng's Li). Nor does it identify the perfective aspect solely with the suffix -le (i.e.

Teng's Lp). Rather, it analyzes the occurrence of both instances of LE (as well as the surface yóu after the negative) as surface reflexes of the co-occurrence in underlying structure of both the atomic predicate COME ABOUT and the existential predicate YÓU. In this respect, it also differs from Wang's (1965) analysis in that it rejects treating the suffix -le as the surface alternant of the underlying aspect marker yóu.

Rohsenow's analysis relates the meaning of sentences containing LE and méi(yóu) in a quite systematic fashion to well-defined logical predicates in their underlying syntactic-semantic structures. His characterization of the perfective suffix -le as indicating "boundedness" of a state or event, as we will see, is adopted in Li and Thompson (1981).¹⁰ The major problem with Rohsenow's analysis, like those of Wang and Teng, is the failure to account for native speakers' usage of LE in discourse contexts. The use of LE is in fact conditioned by several factors, linguistic and non-linguistic, which interact to determine whether or not it will be used in a given context. Syntactic and semantic factors cannot be the only relevant one. Therefore, given the same discourse sample in (2.67) discussed above, Rohsenow's analysis would fail to provide a satisfactory account as to why the suffix -le is withheld in clauses (a)-(c), but is nevertheless used in clause (d). Although Rohsenow does realize the need of a contextual analysis¹¹ of

LE, the framework he adopts does not provide him with the necessary apparatus for the investigation of LE as it appears in discourse contexts.

2.5 Spanos' Pragmatic Analysis

Spanos (1979) advocates a pragmatic approach to the analysis of LE in order to achieve an adequate understanding of how this particle is actually used by native speakers of Mandarin. Following Stalnaker (1972), he takes pragmatics as the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed.

The need for a pragmatic approach comes primarily from Spanos' observation (and that of his informants) that the use of LE depends more on the context in which it appears than on characteristics or properties unique to LE itself. This observation is confirmed by the results of a survey that Spanos conducted in order to "determine how native speakers employ LE when constructing sentences and paragraphs involving the variety of meaning associated with LE" (p. 34). The major findings of the survey are summarized below:

- (i) Use of LE is subject to a principle of non-redundancy, i.e. LE tends to be omitted in contexts where the time, aspects, phase, or modality of action, process or state of affairs is already specified.
- (ii) A rule of consistency appears to operate for some speakers. That is, if LE is used in a specific structure, it will always be used in that structure regardless of redundancy.

- (iii) In instances where the context is insufficient to determine the time, aspect, phase or modality of an action, process or state of affairs, a rule of caution appears to increase the likelihood that LE will be used.

- (iv) LE can be used for special rhetorical purposes.

Let us now examine (2.72), one of the test items included in Spanos' survey. This sample, along with eleven others, was given to sixty-two native speakers of Chinese, who were instructed to insert LE where they thought it was either necessary or optional. The blanks in (2.72) are possible positions where LE can be inserted. The first figure in each blank indicates the percentage of respondents obligatorily using LE and the second figure, the percentage optionally using it.

- (2.72) a. Zuótiān wǒ gēn yíge péngyou dào
yesterday I with one-M friend to
hǎibiān qù .00/.00 wán .03/.06.
seashore go play

'Yesterday, a friend and I went to the seashore to play.'

- b. Yīnwèi fēng tài dà .00/.00 wǒmen zhǐ
because wind too great we only
wán .42/.10 shífēnzhōng jiù huí lái
play ten-minute then return-come
.68/.02.

'Because the wind was too great, we only played ten minutes then returned.'

- c. Huí .02/.00 jiā yǐhòu méi duōjiǔ
return home after not very-long
Lǎo Wáng lái .94/.02.
old Wang come

'Not long after we returned Lao Wang came.'

- d. Tā qǐng .00/.00 wǒmen qù tā jiā chī fàn.
he ask we go he home eat food

'He asked us to go to his home to eat.'

- e. Zhèngǎo wǒmen dōu juéde yǒu yìdiǎr
just-then we all feel have a-bit
è .08/.11 jiù qù Lǎo Wáng jiā chī
hungry then go Lao Wang home eat
.00/.03 fàn .26/.05.
food

'Just then we all felt a little hungry and then went to Old Wang's house to eat.'

- f. Chīwán .15/.27 fàn zuò .44/.21 yìhuēr
eat-finish food sit a-while
jiù huílái .82/.00.
then return-come

'We finished eating, sat awhile, then returned.'

The fact that LE is subject to a principle of non-redundancy, Spanos claims, is indicated by the universal omission of the suffix -le after qù 'go' in clause (a) and the low percentage (.15/.27) after chīwán 'eat-finish' in clause (f). Spanos holds that the adverb zuótiān 'yesterday' in (a) seems to be sufficient for the past tense insofar as none of the subjects thought -le was necessary after qù 'go.' Furthermore, the low percentage of -le in (f) can be explained by appealing to the fact that wán 'finish' independently establishes completion of action, while the past time reference is established by context.

The principle of non-redundancy also has a great impact on the use of the sentence-final le. None of the subjects inserted it after dà 'great' in clause (b) and only very few of them (.08/.11) inserted it after è 'hungry' in clause

(e). Spanos' explanation is that the presence of tài 'too' in (b) and yìdiǎr 'a little' in (e) exerted some influence. That is, tài itself serves to intensify dà, thus rendering a following le unnecessary, and yìdiǎr seems to lessen the degree of intensification on è, thus eliminating the need for an intensive use of le.¹²

The fact that a rule of consistency seems to operate for some speakers is illustrated by the use of LE after the directional verb lái 'come' at the end of clauses (b), (c), and (f).¹³ In both clauses (b) and (f), huílái 'come back' appears at the end of a consequent clause beginning with the word jiù 'then.' Spanos compares the Mandarin subjects' (thirty-nine out of the total sixty-two subjects) use of LE at the end of these two clauses and reports the following patterns which represent the tendencies of Mandarin subjects to use LE after both, neither, or either of these two clauses:

(2.73)	(P1)	huílái	X	. . .	huílái	X	(27 subjects)
	(P2)	huílái	Ø	. . .	huílái	Ø	(6 subjects)
	(P3)	huílái	Ø	. . .	huílái	X	(4 subjects)
	(P4)	huílái	X	. . .	huílái	Ø	(2 subjects)

In (2.73), X marks a necessary presence of LE and Ø, the absence of LE. Spanos holds that P1 and P2 apparently indicate that consistency of response is highly valued by Mandarin subjects.

At the end of clause (c), 94% of all subjects thought LE was necessary. Spanos notes that of the four subjects who did not think it necessary, three thought it was also

unnecessary after huílái 'come back' in clauses (b) and (f). This leads him to arrive at the following observations. Firstly, in the absence of an explicit consequence indicator such as jiù 'then' (as in clause (c)), more subjects (94%) are likely to use LE to indicate consequence. This is a case where a rule of caution is in operation, increasing the likelihood of subjects' use of LE. Secondly, if a subject does not feel the need to use LE in the absence of explicit consequence indicators such as jiù 'then,' he is likely to leave it out even when jiù occurs. This again illustrates the rule of consistency regarding native speakers' use of LE.

Spanos believes that the results of the survey can be placed on a more principled basis by discussing them within a pragmatic framework of explanation. The particular framework he espouses derives from the principles of conversation proposed by H. P. Grice and other writers on the topic of linguistic pragmatics.

Grice (1975) formulates several principles or maxims of conversation which he claims govern rational speech exchanges. The most general of these principles is the Cooperative Principle, which requires a participant in a cooperative speech exchange to make an appropriate contribution to the speech exchange in which he is engaged. From this, four maxims are derived. Of particular relevance here is the Maxim of Manner since it is used by Spanos to

account for the subjects' use of LE in clause (f). The Maxim of Manner relates to how a speaker chooses to say what he says and includes four sub-maxims: (i) Avoid obscurity of expression, (ii) Avoid ambiguity, (iii) Be brief, and (iv) Be orderly.

We recall that in clause (f), only 15% of the subjects chose to employ the verb suffix -le after wán 'finish.' Spanos holds that this low percentage of use is accountable by the sub-maxim of "Be brief." Semantically speaking, the resultative complement wán conveys the idea of completion on its own, thus making -le unnecessary in this context. The same sub-maxim also explains why 56% of the subjects thought the use of the suffix after zuò 'sit' in the same sentence either optional or unnecessary. The past time is already established for the entire paragraph, so the omission of -le in this position can be seen as "attempting to restrict the amount of explicit semantic information to what they [the subjects] thought was absolutely necessary" (p. 69).

As for the high percentage (82%) use of the particle LE after huílái 'come back' in clause (f), Spanos asserts that "this high figure can be explained on the basis of the relevance of the final particle to contexts in which either an isolated past event or a consequent situation is being referred to" (p. 70).

Spanos' research on LE has a lot to commend. It is the first to launch a large-scale survey on native speakers'

usage of this perplexing particle in Mandarin. It is also the first attempt to account for the use of LE in pragmatic terms rather than following the traditional sentential analysis. As an attempt to capture the actual usage of the particle, this is indeed a step in the right direction. There are, however, some problems with his interpretation of the survey results. We point out the major ones below.

First, let us examine the cases where the suffix -le can be clearly identified. The suffix is universally omitted after qù 'go' in clause (a) and after qǐng 'ask' in clause (d). Spanos' explanation is that the presence of the adverbial zuótiān 'yesterday' explicitly establishes the past time context, thus rendering the use of the suffix unnecessary. We notice, however, that the structure itself precludes the use of -le in these two instances. In clause (a), qù wán 'go play' is in fact an integral whole: the purpose of going (to the seashore) is to play, to have fun. The non-use of -le in (d) can be explained in a similar way. Here the purpose of Old Wang's asking (or, inviting) is 'for us to go to his home to eat,' an event which is conceptually as well as discursively an inseparable whole. Similarly, the extremely low percentage (.00/.03) after chī 'eat' in clause (e) is due to the fact that chī fàn 'eat food' is treated as one unit, most appropriately analyzed as a verb-object construction functioning as a verb in its own right.¹⁴

In the same vein, the extremely low percentage of -le (.02/.00) after huí 'return' in clause (c) is due perhaps to the subjects' treating huí jiā 'return home' as a conceptual whole. It is worth noting that the presence of yǐhòu 'after' in (c) may have exerted some influence on the low percentage in the clause. Recall that one of the functions of -le is to mark explicitly the anteriority of one event in relation to another event. Therefore, it is possible that in (c), the use of the conjunctive yǐhòu 'after' signals explicitly that the event of '(our) returning home' took place prior to the event of 'Old Wang's coming.' This in fact confirms our observation in Section 2.1.1 that the suffix -le, as a marker of "anteriority," is rendered unnecessary in the presence of explicit temporal markers such as yǐhòu. More importantly, it shows that in order to provide a better account of the suffix -le, we need to examine the context in which it occurs.

With respect to the use of -le after zuò 'sit' in clause (f), 44% of the subjects in Spanos' survey thought it obligatory and another 21% considered it optional. Spanos' explanation, as we recall, is that with the temporal marker zuótiān 'yesterday' in clause (a), the past time is already established for the whole paragraph, so the sub-maxim of "Be brief" would render the use of -le (supposedly a past-time marker for Spanos) in this position not unnecessary. Spanos holds that the same maxim also accounts for the subjects'

insertion of the suffix (.42/.10) after wán 'play' in clause (b). In our survey of contemporary use of LE in narrative discourse, we purposely included the sample in (2.72) as a test item to see if the same results could be obtained. It is interesting to note that, although on the whole our respondents' use of LE concerning this sample does not differ very much from that represented in (2.72), there are two positions where our respondents showed a considerably higher percentage of insertion: after wán 'play' in (b) (.63/.16), and after zuò 'sit' in (f) (.65/.18). This suggests that there are some other factors affecting the use of the suffix -le in discourse than can be explained by the maxim of "Be brief." Postponing our main arguments until later chapters, we simply point out here that our respondents in general tend to use the suffix more often with monosyllabic action/event verbs.

Now let us examine briefly Spanos' account of the sentence-final le. With respect to (2.72), he holds that the principle of non-redundancy accounts for the universal omission of le after dà 'great' in clause (b) and its low percentage (.08/.11) after e 'hungry' in (e). That is, the presence in (b) of tài 'too,' which serves to intensify dà 'great' renders the "excessiveness" use of the particle unnecessary (cf. Chao (1968), reviewed above.) On the other hand, the use of yìdiǎr 'a little' in (e) eliminates the use of le, since yìdiǎr seems to lessen the degree of

intensification. This explanation, however, does not capture the use of le in discourse. The unanimous omission of le in (b) can in fact be explained more convincingly on discourse grounds.

If we compare the use of le at the end of clause (a) and clause (b), we notice a significant difference in the percentage figures. After wán 'play' in (a), only 3% of the subjects thought le necessary and 6% optional. After huí lái 'return' in (b), however, 68% thought it necessary and 2% optional.¹⁵ Both clauses are regarded by Spanos as expressing "change of state." Why, then, is there such a great divergence in use? In Chang (1982), it is proposed that sentence-final le be analyzed as a discourse-final particle, indicating the end of a discourse or topical unit. In the light of this analysis, the extremely low percentage of le at the end of clause (a) is understandable. In terms of discourse, clauses (a) and (b) in fact make up a discourse unit. This is further substantiated by the presence of the causal conjunction yīnwèi 'because,' an overt discourse-internal tie between the clauses.¹⁶ The majority of the subjects thus withheld the use of le until the end of (b).

The universal omission of le after dà 'great' in clause (b) is thus understandable and in fact expected. So is the extremely low percentage after è 'hungry' in (e). Both clauses are non-discourse-final. The high percentage of le

after lái 'come' (.94/.02) and after huílái 'come back' (.82/.00) further points to the use of le as a discourse-final particle. The factors which interact to determine the use of the sentence-final le in discourse will be discussed in Section 3.4.3 of Chapter III. In general, then, Spanos' account of le needs to be supplemented by a more vigorous discourse analysis of how the particle is actually employed in discourse context.

2.6 Li and Thompson's Functional Treatment

Li and Thompson (1981) attempt to provide a functional description of LE, discussing it in terms of the situations in which it is used, with an eye on its total communicative context. The suffix -le is treated as a marker of the perfective aspect and is used in situations in which the notion of "boundedness" applies. The sentence-final le, on the other hand, is regarded as a marker of "currently relevant state" and as such appears in a variety of situations. Li and Thompson's account of the perfective -le is presented below in 2.6.1 and that of the "currently relevant state" le, in 2.6.2.

2.6.1 The Perfective -Le

Li and Thompson treat -le as a marker for the perfective aspect, the function of which is to indicate that "an event is being viewed in its entirety or as a whole"17

(1981: 185). According to Li and Thompson, an event is viewed in its entirety if it is bounded temporally, spatially, or conceptually. There are essentially four ways in which an event can be bounded:

- (A) By being a quantified event
- (B) By being a definite or specific event
- (C) By being inherently bounded because of the meaning of the verb
- (D) By being the first event in a sequence

Below we present Li and Thompson's justification of each of these categories in turn.

A. A Quantified Event

An event can be viewed as bounded when limits, temporal or spatial, are placed on it. For example,

- (2.74) Tā shuì-le sānge zhōngtóu.
he sleep-le three-M hour

'He slept for three hours.'

- (2.75) Dírén wàng hòu chètui-le èrshí lǐ.
enemy toward back retreat-le twenty mile

'The enemy retreated twenty miles.'

In (2.74), the event signaled by the verb shuì 'sleep' is limited by the overt temporal phrase sānge zhōngtóu 'three hours,' specifying the amount of time the event took. In (2.75), a spatial limit èrshí lǐ 'twenty miles' is placed on the verb chètui 'retreat,' to which the suffix -le is attached.

B. Definite or Specific Event

An event will qualify as bounded if the direct object is understood as a definite noun phrase. This is

particularly true if the direct object is a proper noun or contains a demonstrative modifier as in (2.76) and (2.77):

- (2.76) Wǒ pèngdào-le Lín Huì.
I bump-into-le Lin Hui

'I ran into Lin Hui.'

- (2.77) Tā xiěcuò-le nèige zì.
he write-wrong-le that-M character

'He wrote that character wrong.'

A specific event is signaled in (2.76) and the direct object Lín Huì is definite, naming a specific person. Sentence (2.77) can be used in a context in which nèige zì 'that character' is being singled out, e.g. in contrast with another character which is written correctly.

C. Verbs with Inherent Bounded Meaning

Li and Thompson note that some verbs represent specific, bounded events by virtue of their meaning. For example, in (2.78) and (2.79),

- (2.78) Tā qùnián sǐ-le.
he last-year die-le

'He died last year.'

- (2.79) Wǒ wàng-le tāde dìzhǐ.
I forget-le his address

'I forgot his address.'

the verbs sǐ 'die' and wàng 'forget' have the end point included in their respective meanings. Since they are inherently bounded, verbs such as sǐ and wàng (as well as miè 'extinguish' and diào 'fall off') generally occur with the perfective -le.

D. First Event in a Sequence

Another case where an event can be viewed as "bounded" is being the first event in a sequence. The first event is regarded as an unanalyzable whole since its occurrence is bounded by the subsequent event. That is, after one event has taken place, another one happens or a new state materializes. In these instances, -le is used, and the sentences can often be translated with 'after' or 'when' in English.

- (2.80) Wǒ chīwán-le nǐ chī.
I eat-finish-le you eat

'After I have finished eating, then you eat.'

- (2.81) Wǒ kànwán-le bào, jiù shuì.
I read-finish-le paper then sleep

'When I finish reading the paper, I'll go to sleep.'

It is apparent that Li and Thompson intend to unify the various uses of the perfective suffix -le by identifying it as a marker of "boundedness." This is indeed an improvement over the traditional "completed action" interpretation of the perfective -le. Li and Thompson's analysis, however, is not without problems. To begin with, let us examine their first two categories: "quantified" and "specific" events.

We notice, first of all, that not all "bounded" quantified and specific events require the use of -le. Observe, for example, the following excerpt from one of the test items included in our survey:

- (2.82) a. Yúshì Míngdì biān pàiqiǎn
 therefore Ming-Emperor then send
.10/.31 Cǎiyīn hé Qínjīng liǎngge
 Caiyin and Qinjing two-M
 guānyuán dào .03/.00 Yīndù qù .00/.01
 official to India go
 qiúqù .00/.01 fójīng
 search Buddhist-sutra
- b. tāmen zǒudào .23/.23 xiànzài Āfùhàn
 they reach now Afghanistan
 de yíge dìfāng
 DE one-M place
- c. dédào-le .69/.23 fójīng hé
 acquire Buddhist-sutra and
 fóxiàng
 Buddhist-statue

'Thereupon, Emperor Ming sent two officials, Caiyin and Qinjing, to India to search for the Buddhist sutras. When they came to a place known today as Afghanistan, they found the Buddhist sutras and statues.'

In (2.82), the blanks show the potential positions for the suffix -le to occur. In each blank the first figure indicates the percentage of respondents who inserted an obligatory -le and the second, the optional use of the suffix. As the percentage figures indicate, among the six potential slots for -le, only the one in clause (c) attracts a majority percentage use of the suffix. This high percentage, it seems, can be accounted for in terms of Li and Thompson's notion of "boundedness." That is, clause (c) qualifies as a (bounded) specific event since the direct object fójīng hé fóxiàng 'the Buddhist sutras and statues' is a definite noun phrase. However, if we now examine clause (a), which also represents a "specific" event (since

it contains a "definite" direct object noun phrase--Càiyīn hé Qínjīng liǎngge guānyuán 'the two officials Caiyin and Qijing'), we find that less than half of the respondents (.10/.31) inserted -le after this verb. This shows that the governing principle for the use of -le may require more than the syntactico-semantic condition underlying Li and Thompson's claim that the verb in a clause representing a specific event will typically occur with the suffix -le. Next, let us examine clause (b), which contains the phrase xiànzài Āfùhàn de yíge dìfāng 'a place now known as Afghanistan.' This phrase sets a spatial limit on the verb zǒudào 'reach.' Clause (b) thus qualifies, in Li and Thompson's terms, as a "quantified" event, just as the sample in (2.75) does. The fact that only 46% of the respondents (23% obligatory and 23% optional) inserted -le after zǒudào in this clause again shows that Li and Thompson's analysis does not provide a satisfactory account of native speakers' use of the suffix, specifically in narrative discourse.

The low percentage of -le in the first two clauses of the excerpt is by no means random. In fact, there are good discourse reasons for the respondents to withhold the use of -le until clause (c). This will become clearer in Chapter III, where the discourse functions of the suffix are explored.

With respect to Li and Thompson's claim that the suffix -le typically occurs with verbs with inherent bounded meaning, we have two brief comments as follows. First, we note that among the examples they cite under this third category, six are like (2.78) in that the verb is followed immediately by LE in the sentence-final position. Such occurrence of LE is at best ambiguous, and more likely than not, it is the sentence-final le, indicating a "change of state" meaning. The sentence in (2.78), Tā qùnián sǐ le 'He died last year' in fact indicates a change last year from the state in which tā 'he' was still alive to the state in which this was no longer true. Secondly, in six of the seven examples Li and Thompson discuss, the verb is monosyllabic (e.g. sǐ 'die,' miè 'extinguish,' diào 'fall off'). As we will see in Chapter III, monosyllabic verbs in Mandarin tend to occur with the suffix -le to recount what (has) happened. Thus, without resorting to the idiosyncratic nature of the verbs (i.e. verbs with inherent bounded meaning), we can still account for the use of -le in these instances. This apparently achieves more generality than Li and Thompson's analysis.

The last category, i.e. the first event in a sequence, is comparable to our analysis of -le as a marker of anteriority. To sum up, Li and Thompson's treatment of the suffix -le as a marker of "bounded" events needs further scrutiny. The major problem with their analysis, as is

evident from their sample sentences, is that it deals primarily with isolated utterances. This prevents them from discovering the use of -le in narrative discourse.

2.6.2 The "Currently Relevant State" Le

Li and Thompson treat the sentence-final le as a marker of "Currently Relevant State" (abbreviated CRS).¹⁸ What this means is that le claims that "a state of affairs has special current relevance with respect to some particular situation" (1981: 240). For example, in (2.83),

(2.83) (Someone calls Mr. Liao, who is out, and the person answering the phone may say)

Tā chū qù mǎi dōngxi le.
he exit go buy thing le

'He's gone shopping.'

Le signals that Mr. Liao's having gone shopping is "current" with regard to the unmarked speech situation, i.e. the moment at which the conversation is taking place. Moreover, the state of Mr. Liao's having gone shopping is "relevant" to the caller's desire to talk to him: the caller cannot do so, because he is not there. Finally, although in (2.83) the verb phrase chū qù mǎi dōngxi 'go out to buy things' involves an action, with the presence of le, the sentence is not talking about the action of Mr. Liao's going out or buying, but about the state of his having gone shopping and its relevance for the present situation.

Li and Thompson further group in five categories the ways in which le signals CRS. That is, they claim that a sentence with le conveys CRS if the state of affairs it represents:

- (A) Is a changed state
- (B) Corrects a wrong assumption
- (C) Reports progress so far
- (D) Determines what will happen next
- (E) Is the speaker's contribution to the conversation at that point

In the following, we will examine each of these five categories of situation in turn.

A. Change of State

Li and Thompson claim that the first set of circumstances under which le signals a CRS is when that state is new or changed, either from the way it was before or from the way the speaker thought it was before. Compare, for instance, the following minimal-pair sentences:

- (2.84) (To a head waitress who has asked how many people there are)

Wǒmen èrshísì-ge.
we twenty-four-M

'There are twenty-four of us.'

- (2.85) (One tour guide to another when the last tourist has finally boarded the bus, after some delay)

Wǒmen èrshísì-ge le.
we twenty-four-M le

'Now there are twenty-four of us.'

In (2.85) we see that the new state of affairs hinges on the fact that there is a change from one to another. That is,

le signals that some state of affairs holds now which did not hold before.

B. Correcting a Wrong Assumption

Another common way in which a state of affairs becomes relevant to a particular situation is when that state of affairs is different from what the hearer has been assuming. The wrong assumption may be explicitly brought out in the conversation (as in (2.86)); it may be an assumption that the speaker simply knows that the hearer holds (as in (2.87)); or it may be a normal assumption that people hold unless told differently (as in (2.88)):

(2.86) (Father to three-year-old daughter)

F: Yào bú yào bàba xǐ?
want not want Daddy wash

'Do you want Daddy to wash (you)?'

D: Bú yào.
not want

'No.'

F: Yào shéi?
want who

'Whom do you want?'

D: Māma.
Mommy

'(I want) Mommy.'

F: Māma bù xǐ le.
Mommy not wash le

'Mommy isn't going to wash you (though you thought she was).'

- (2.87) (In a comic strip, Glorie Bee is contradicting a normal assumption between her and Goofy)

Nǐ zuìhǎo bú yào lái kàn diànshì le,
 you had-better not will come look TV le
 wǒ dé-le zhòng shāngfēng.
 I get-le heavy cold

'You'd better not come over to watch TV (this time)--I caught a terrible cold.'

- (2.88) (A neighbor tells Zengshen's¹⁹ mother as he runs towards her)

Zēngshēn shā rén le.
 Zengshen kill person le

'Zengshen has killed someone.'

The above examples show that no matter which of the three types of mistaken assumptions is playing a role in the conversation, le will appear with the sentence whose current relevance is to correct a wrong assumption on the part of the hearer.

C. Progress So Far

Li and Thompson claim that another set of circumstances in which le signals a CRS is when that state of affairs brings the hearer up to date on the progress made so far in a more extensive project or venture about which both speaker and hearer know (1981: 270). For instance, if A knows B is studying Tang poetry, B can say:

- (2.89) Táng shī sānbǎi-shǒu wǒ bèi
 Tang poem three-hundred-M I memorize
 chūlái-le yí-bàn le.
 out-le one-half le

'I've memorized half of the Three Hundred Tang Poems now.'

Similarly, if A knows B has been planning to go to the Zhangs' for dinner or that B has been hoping to get an invitation, then B can use sentence (2.90) to tell A what he has achieved with that project:

- (2.90) Wǒ zuótiān dào Zhāng jiā chī fàn le.
 I yesterday to Zhang home eat food le
 'I (finally) went to dinner at the Zhangs' yesterday.'

D. What Happens Next

Another class of contexts in which a state of affairs is currently relevant includes those in which that state of affairs determines what happens next. For instance, Li and Thompson claim that le in (2.91), besides expressing "progress so far," also signals to the hearer that something can happen right away:

- (2.91) Wǒ xǐhǎo-le yīfú le.
 I wash-finish-le clothes le
 'I've finished washing the clothes.
 (So now: we can go to the movies;
 you can do your yoga in the
 laundry room;
 I'm free to play chess with you;
 etc.)'

Furthermore, a le sentence is often used to announce that a new state of affairs is just about to be realized, and the hearer is expected to make an appropriate response. The following minimal-pair sentences illustrate this point:

- (2.92) Xiǎo Huáng jiù yào lái.
 little Huang soon will come
 'Little Huang will be here soon.'

- (2.93) Xiǎo Huáng jiù yào lái le.
 little Huang soon will come le

'Little Huang is about to arrive.
 (So: hide the gifts;
 put your pants on;
 get ready to holler "Surprise";
 etc.)'

Li and Thompson treat (2.92) as either a simple neutral comment or an answer to a question. On the other hand, (2.93), with le, expresses CRS because it implies that the hearer should do something as a consequence of Little Huang's arrival.

E. Closing a Statement

The sentence-final le can also express CRS when the speaker wants to signal that "This is my contribution to the conversation (so far)." In this case, then, le "signals that the speaker's contribution is 'newsworthy' in and of itself; it brings a statement into the current situation by tagging it as the speaker's total contribution as of that moment" (Li and Thompson, 1981: 283). Examine, for instance, the following:

- (2.94) A: (to child)

Nǐ wèishéme dùzi zhème dà?
 you why abdomen this big

'Why are you so big in the abdomen?'

B: Wǒ chī de tài bǎo.
 I eat DE too full

'I'm too full from eating.'

- (2.95) (to a friend, as an afterthought after a banquet)

Wǒ chī de tài bǎo le.
I eat DE too full le

'(I) tell you what, I'm too full from eating.'

Li and Thompson's explanation is that as a response to a question, the relevance of the child's remark in (2.94) is clear and needs no le to mark it, while the same utterance made in a context where it serves as an unsolicited comment, as in (2.95), must have the le to signal that this piece of volunteered information is all the speaker has to contribute at the moment.

Furthermore, this usage of le can be seen to function in "wrapping up" a story; here it signals the current relevance of the state of affairs represented by the last line in the story by signaling that the story is now over.

Li and Thompson's example is (2.96):

- (2.96) Jiéguǒ wǒmen jiù bān-huí
in-the-end we then move-return
Zhōngguó le.
China le

'In the end, we moved back to China.'

Li and Thompson (1981) is by far the most detailed and comprehensive work on the sentence-final le in Mandarin Chinese. Their analysis of le in terms of its communicative function is indeed a step in the right direction. However, there are still some problems inherent in their analysis. Below we list some of our major objections.

First of all, while we agree with Li and Thompson's analysis of le as a marker of "Currently Relevant State," we find that their classification of the five categories in which le signals CRS is not entirely convincing. The last category, "closing a statement," in fact belongs to the discourse domain and should be separated from the rest. These five categories thus belong to different levels of linguistic analysis. The reason for this will become clear in Chapter III when the discourse functions of le are discussed.

Second, Li and Thompson's first four categories seem to be an over-differentiation. The first category, "change of state," is well-established, since le indeed exhibits this function in many examples we have examined so far. The second category, "correcting a wrong assumption," however, is problematic. Apparently, Li and Thompson attempt to differentiate this from the first category when they state that "le is used to express a state that is currently relevant for the purpose of correcting a wrong assumption on the part of the hearer" (1981: 270). There are, however, many instances where the speaker is correcting a wrong assumption the hearer holds, yet there is no need for le to occur. A case in point is (2.97):

- (2.97) A: Dàgài shí-diǎn-bàn le.
 probably ten-o'clock-half le
 Wǒ gāi zǒu le.
 I should leave le

'It's probably 10:30 now. I'd better go.'

B: Xiànzài chà shí-fēn shí-diǎn.
 now short ten-minute ten-o'clock
 Xià-wán zhèi-pán qí zài zǒu ba!
 play-finish this-M chess then leave PART

'(No,) it's 9:50. Let's finish this game
 of chess before you leave.'

In (2.97), Speaker B is obviously correcting Speaker A's wrong assumption that 'it's probably ten-thirty now.' However, le is not used. Furthermore, if we examine the le's in (2.86)-(2.88), we find that all of them involve "change of state," i.e. they all indicate a change from one state to another. The specific meanings can be derived from context in each sentence.

Similarly, the le's in (2.89) and (2.90), under the category of "progress so far," express the same idea. For instance, in (2.89), the change is from the memorization of, say, a quarter to a half of the three hundred Tang poems. By the same token, le in (2.90) indicates the change from not having been to Zhangs' for dinner to eventually going there.

Li and Thompson's second and third categories, therefore, seem superfluous, since they can be grouped under the first category of "change of state." The fourth category, "what happens next," is even more questionable. Semantically, the le's in (2.91) and (2.93) both indicate "change of state," the only difference being that in the former the change is currently relevant whereas in the latter the change lies sometime in the future. Therefore,

this category, like the second and the third one, is superfluous and should be grouped under the first category.

Now let us examine the last category, "closing a statement." Li and Thompson are correct in claiming that le functions as a marker of "finality." However, their explanation is not explicit enough and the examples they have cited to illustrate this point are questionable. For instance, in (2.94), le is in fact needed to mark the end of Speaker B's statement, and without it, the whole statement becomes incomplete.

Postponing our discussion of the discourse functions of le until next chapter, here we make some general comments on their analysis of the finality le. To begin with, although Li and Thompson propose to treat le as a marker of "finality," they fail to examine in detail how le exhibits this function in Chinese discourse. This neglect, we think, may be in part due to the data they have collected, which are too small and too segmented to reveal any significant results. Second, although they may realize that le has some discourse function, their analysis is still much too sentence-oriented. Therefore, in the cases where the occurrence or non-occurrence of le in Chinese discourse cannot be satisfactorily accounted for in terms of sentential analysis, their analysis also fails.

2.7 Andreasen's Foregrounding Versus Backgrounding

Andreasen (1981) attempts to "discover the linguistic means by which narrative language is formally distinguished from non-narrative language in Chinese and the formal signals that allow a reader of Chinese to process certain information as directly relevant to the story line [i.e. foregrounding] and other information as amplifying or commenting on the events of the main narrative [i.e. backgrounding]"²⁰ (p.17). Following Li and Thompson (1981), he treats the suffix -le as the marker of the perfective aspect, expressing the totality of the situation referred to by the verb. The sentence-final le is treated as the marker of the perfect aspect, indicating that a state of affairs has special current relevance with respect to some particular situation.

Andreasen further assumes that as a marker of perfectivity, the suffix -le typically occurs in foregrounded clauses of the narrative, though its presence is sometimes rendered unnecessary by other perfectivizing devices which he terms "perfectivizing verbal complements":

- (2.98) Tā cóng fángzi-lǐ zǒu dào zhèr.
he from house-LOC walk to here

'He walked from his house to here.'

- (2.99) Wǒ bǎ shǒubiǎo fàng zài chōutì-lǐ.
I BA watch put at drawer-LOC

'I put the watch in the drawer.'

- (2.100) Wǒ jì gěi tā yìfēng xìn.
I send to him one-M letter
'I sent him a letter.'
- (2.101) Tā chuānshàng dàyī.
he put-on coat
'He put on his coat.'
- (2.102) Tā chīwán fàn lái.
he eat-finish food come
'He came after he finished eating.'
- (2.103) Mǎ Xiānsheng yòu wàng qián zǒu.
Ma Mr. then toward-ahead walk
'Mr. Ma then walked on ahead.'
- (2.104) Lǎo Shuān shēn shǒu guòqù.
old Shuan stretch hand across
'Old Shuan stretched out his hand.'

Andreasen holds that in each of these sentences, another element is responsible for perfectivizing the verb, thus making -le redundant. In (2.98), the perfectivizing expression is the directional phrase dào zhèr 'to here'; in (2.99), it is the locative phrase zài chōutì-lǐ 'in the drawer'; in (2.100), it is the indirect object phrase gěi tā 'to him.' All these expressions put boundaries on the events involved, i.e. walking (zǒu) in (2.98), putting (fàng) in (2.99), and sending (jì) in (2.100), by specifying their spatial limits. Similarly, the verb particle shàng 'on, in' in (2.101) and the resultative complement wán 'finish' in (2.102) perform the task of perfectivizing the verb in each sentence. With respect to (2.103) and (2.104), Andreasen holds that the perfective -le is rendered

unnecessary by the pre-verbal directional phrase wàng qián 'toward ahead/front' in (2.103) and the post-objective verbal complement guòqu 'across' in (2.104).

With regard to the sentence-final le, Andreasen holds that as the marker of the perfect aspect, it occurs primarily in the backgrounded clauses of the narrative. He cites the following quote from Li and Thompson (1979: 2) to substantiate his point:

In narrative, then, the perfect functions to gather strands at a particular point in the narration or to inject background comments which are relevant to the situation existing at a given point in the narration.

Andreasen examines eleven pieces of actual samples of written narrative fiction from the Early Vernacular (14th-17th centuries), Late Vernacular (18th-19th centuries) and Modern (20th century) periods of Chinese literary history. With respect to the foregrounding devices, he notes three distinct diachronic trends of formal foregrounding signals in Chinese narrative: (i) an increase in the use of the perfective -le; (ii) a decrease in the use of resultative verbal complements; and (iii) an increase in the use of multiple markers of narrativity (e.g. the co-occurrence of -le and other perfectivizing devices such as the directional complement dào 'arrive' or the resultative complement wán 'finish' within single sentences). These trends are represented in Tables 1--3 below, where EV represents Early Vernacular; LV, Late Vernacular; and MD, Modern.

Table 1 The Perfective -le

EV	10.0%
LV	24.5%
MD	23.5%

Table 2 The Resultative Complements

EV	72.5%
LV	41.5%
MD	56.9%

Table 3 Use of Multiple Narrativity Markers

	one or none	two or more
EV	72.5%	27.5%
LV	73.4%	26.6%
MD	56.8%	43.2%

With respect to backgrounding devices, Andreasen notes that a great variety of linguistic means are employed: equational verbs (e.g. shì 'be'), existential verbs (e.g. yǒu 'have'), mental process verbs (e.g. xiǎng 'think'), pre-verbal imperfective aspect markers (e.g. zài 'at') and post-verbal imperfective aspect markers (e.g. -zhe). He does not elaborate on the use of the sentence-final le as a backgrounding device, except in the following sample:

- (2.105) Qiūtiān de hòu-bàn-yè
autumn DE very-early-morning
yuèliàng xiàqù le
moon down-go
tàiyáng hái méiyǒu chū . . .
sun yet not-have rise

'It was a very early autumn morning. The moon had gone down, and the sun had not yet risen . . .'

This sample is the opening portion of one of the Modern selections Andreasen analyzes.²¹ It sets the scene by describing a still, dark, pre-dawn autumn morning.

Andreasen's only comment is that le in (2.105) serves as a marker of the perfect aspect and that it "describes the state resulting from the moon's having gone down and comments on its current relevance" (p. 66).

In what follows, we will focus on Andreasen's treatment of the perfective -le, particularly its occurrence in the narratives of the Modern period, since we are interested primarily in the contemporary usage of this suffix by native speakers of Mandarin.

After examining the three narrative samples selected from the Modern period, Andreasen makes the following observations. Firstly, the most frequently employed perfectivizing strategy of the period is not the use of -le, but rather the use of what he calls "perfectivizing verbal complements," specifically those occurring in immediate post-verbal position. These complements include verb particles (e.g. shàng 'on' and qǐ 'up'), directional complements (e.g. gěi 'to' and zài 'at') and resultative complements (e.g. dào 'arrive, to' and jiàn 'see'), which together make up 56.9% of the perfectivizing strategies (29 occurrences in the total of 51 sentences in the three selections.) By contrast with the numerous occurrences of the perfectivizing verbal complements, the perfective -le only occurs 12 times in a total of 51 sentences (33.5%).

Another major observation Andreasen makes after examining the three sample narratives of the Modern period

is that individual narrators vary in their use of perfectivizing strategies. Of the three authors, he notes that Lu Xun, without exception, uses either -le or a perfectivizing verbal complement, but never both in the same sentence. The second author, Bai Xianrong, on the other hand, uses simultaneously a perfectivizing verbal complement of some kind with all the seven occurrences of -le in the sample narrative. Guo Moruo, the third author, differs drastically from Bai Xianrong in that he does not use -le at all. This suggests that in investigating the narrative use of -le, we need to take into account the stylistic preferences of individual authors.

However, in our examination of two other stories by Lu Xun and Guo Moruo, we found that the suffix -le is nevertheless used with some kind of perfectivizing verbal complements. For example, there are six instances of this in Guo Moruo's story Mǎkèsī Jìn Wénmiào 'Marx Enters the Confucian Temple.' Furthermore, in the story Kǒng Yǐjǐ 'Kong Yiji,' by Lu Xun, we also found five instances where -le co-occurs with some type of perfectivizing verbal complement. It is worth noting that such instances almost invariably occur at the end of a discourse segment, as in (2.106), an excerpt from Lu Xun's Kǒng Yǐjǐ 'Kong Yiji':

- (2.106) a. Zài zhèi shíhòu, zhònggrén yě dōu
 at this time, everyone also all
 hōngxào qǐlái,
 burst-laugh up-come

- b. diàn nèi-wài chōngmǎn-le
store inside-outside fill-up-le
kuàihuó de kōngqì.
merry DE atmosphere

'At this moment, everyone burst into laughter. (And) the entire store was filled with joyful atmosphere.

In this excerpt, the suffix -le is used with chōngmǎn, a verb compound consisting of the main verb chōng 'fill' and the resultative complement mǎn 'full, up.' The use of -le in narrative samples like (2.106) thus shows that stylistic preferences of individual authors may not be the only determining factor for the use or non-use of the suffix in narrative discourse. In fact, in Bai Xianrong's story Jīn Dàbān de Zuìhòu Yíyè 'Miss Jin the Head Taxi-dancer's Last Night,' four of the seven instances (where -le co-occurs with perfectivizing verbal complements) are of similar nature as the sample in (2.106).²² Observe, for example, the use of -le after dēngshàng 'climb up' in (2.107):

- (2.107) a. Yóu Jīn dàbān lǐng duì
with Jin captain lead group
- b. shēn hòu gēn-zhe shí-lái-ge dǎbàn
body behind follow-zhe ten-odd-M dress-up
de yī-lǚ fēngliú de wǎniáng
DE dress-shoe elegant DE taxidancer
- c. chuóchuó-yuēyuē de dēngshàng-le wǔtīng
charming DE climb-up-le dancehall
de èrlóu.
DE two-floor

'With Miss Jin the head taxidriver leading, ten or so taxidancers, all dressed in elegant dresses and shoes, charmingly climbed up the second floor of the dancehall.'

The use of -le in these samples thus shows that a closer examination of the over-all organization of discourse samples is needed in order to better understand the discourse functions -le serves in a narrative discourse. These functions of -le will be further explored in Chapter III.

Andreasen's study is significant in that it covers both the diachronic and the synchronic aspects of the perfective -le in Mandarin. His analysis of -le as marking the foregrounded events in a narrative is essentially a correct observation. However, there are numerous cases in which his explanation of the use and non-use of the suffix is not entirely convincing. Observe, for instance, the following short excerpt (where $\emptyset$ indicates the position in which -le could potentially be used):

- (2.108) a. Huá Lǎoshuān hūrán zuòqǐ $\emptyset$ shēn,
Hua Laoshuan suddenly sit-up body
- b. cā-zhe huǒcái
strike-zhe match
- c. diǎnshàng $\emptyset$ biàn-shēn yóulà de dēngzhǎn
light-on whole-body grease DE oil-lamp
- d. chágǔǎn de liǎngjiān wūzi-lǐ biàn
tea-house DE two-M room-LOC then
mímǎn-le qīng-bái de guāng.
fill-le green-white DE light

'Hua Laoshuan suddenly sat up, (and) striking a match, lit the completely grease-covered oil lamp. The two rooms in the teahouse then were filled with a greenish-white light.'

This excerpt is from Lu Xun's story Yào 'Medicine.' It narrates four events occurring in succession: Hua's suddenly sitting up, his striking a match, lighting the oil lamp, and the two rooms' becoming filled with light. Clause (b) is marked by the imperfective aspect marker -zhe, which signals the simultaneity of the background action of Hua's 'striking a match' with the action verb diǎn 'light' in clause (c). The use of -le is thus ruled out in (b). Among the three "kinetic" events expressed by clauses (a), (c), and (d), only the last is marked by the suffix -le. Andreasen's explanation is that the presence of the "highly" quantified object, qīng-bái de quāng 'greenish-white light' in (d) conditions the occurrence of -le even in the clearly established past-time context of (2.108). We wonder, however, why an equally "highly" quantified object biànshēn yóulà de dēngzhǎn 'oil lamp completely covered with grease' would not require the use of -le after diǎnshàng 'light up' in clause (c).

The non-use of -le after diǎnshàng 'light up' in (c) is in fact well-justified on discourse grounds. The clause represents a sub-event of an event line, which contains another sub-event, the one in (d). This is further verified by the presence of the consequent conjunction biàn 'then' in clause (d).²³ In terms of discourse, then, the two clauses form a close-knit unit. The use of -le in (c), though permissible in terms of syntax, would break the unit into

two separate events, thus rendering the passage "choppy." This perhaps explains why the author did not use it in this position. The author's use of -le in clause (d), on the other hand, is needed for discourse reasons. Postponing our main arguments until next chapter, we simply point out here that the use of -le in (d) is to mark the "peak"²⁴ in a series of events, signaling explicitly that the clause represents the culminating and most prominent event in the context of (2.108).

This analysis in fact provides a natural explanation for Andreasen's observation that -le, as a foregrounding device, does not occur as frequently as other perfectivizing verbal complements in Chinese narrative discourse. That is, although -le occurs in foregrounded clauses of a Chinese narrative, not all foregrounded events are marked by -le. The suffix is reserved for marking only the most prominent event (i.e. the "peak") in a discourse segment, as its use in samples (2.106)-(2.108) shows.²⁵ With respect to the non-use of -le in clause (a), we do not have a ready explanation at the moment. We have included the sample in (2.108) in our survey and will report the respondents' use of -le in this clause in Chapter IV.

2.8 Notes

1. See, for instance, examples (1.4)-(1.6) in Section 1.1.
2. This instance of LE is in fact the sentence-final le. See discussion at the end of the section.
3. "Situation" is used in Comrie (1976) as a cover term: it may be either a state, or an event, or a process.
4. See also Hopper (1977: 48), who holds that "this indication of sequentiality [of the perfective aspect] is extended to mean the discreteness and completion of each event so marked, and hence to the idea of anteriority [our emphasis] of one event to the following one."
5. For a detailed discussion of the various types of resultative verb complements, see Li and Thompson (1981), Chu (1983) and Huang (1980).
6. This will be further elaborated in Section 3.3.1 of Chapter III. See also Tai (1985) for a detailed discussion of temporal sequence and word order in Mandarin Chinese.
7. Following Comrie (1976: 51), we use the term "process" to refer to a dynamic situation viewed imperfectively and "event" to refer to a dynamic situation viewed as a single complete whole.
8. The suffix -zhe should be more appropriately analyzed as the "concomitative" aspect marker. As Su (1973: 45) defines it, "concomitative refers to an action or event existing or occurring concurrently with or accompanying what is denoted by the main verb in the sentence." See also Section 4.2, where the incompatibility of -zhe with the suffix -le is examined from a discourse perspective.
9. This is based on the intuition of six native speakers of Chinese in an informal survey.
10. See review of Li and Thompson (1981) in Section 2.6.1.
11. For example, Rohsenow (1978: 129) states that "the context for the utterance containing the verbal suffix -le may occur beyond the limits of the sentence or utterance, either in terms of explicit or implicit time references in other sentences in the discourse, or in the extra-linguistic 'context of situation'."

12. Here Spanos is apparently referring to Chao's (1968) le of "excessive degree," which, as we saw in Section 2.1.2, is derived from the basic meaning of le as a "change of state" particle.
13. These instances of LE are indeterminate between the suffix -le and the sentence-final le, since they occur at the end of the sentence and are immediately preceded by the main verb of the sentence.
14. A parallel example is given in Chao (1968: 247):
 (Tā) chūbān-le yībēn shū.
 (he) publish-le one-M book
 '(He) published a book.'
 Here chūbān 'publish' is in fact verb-object in form: chū meaning 'issue' and bān, 'printing.' However, it is used as a transitive verb as a whole.
15. The respondents in our survey showed a higher percentage of insertion: (.81/.05) after huílái 'return' in clause (b). At the end of clause (a), the percentage is almost the same: (.03/.05). See sample (8) in Appendix for a clause-by-clause comparison.
16. See Section 3.4.3 of Chapter III for a more detailed discussion of the interplay between discourse-internal ties and the use of le in narrative discourse.
17. This notion of perfectivity is similar to Comrie's (1976: 18) metaphor that the perfective reduces a situation to a "blob."
18. See also Comrie (1976) who holds that the perfect "indicates the continuing present relevance of a past situation" (p. 52). Comrie further notes that the perfect is rather different from other aspects since it tells us nothing directly about the situation itself. Whether the perfect should be considered an aspect, however, is not our immediate concern here.
19. Zengshen (505-437 B.C.), one of the greatest sages in Chinese history, is well-known for his filial piety, his prudent conduct, and his great learning.
20. For a more thorough discussion of these notions and the morphosyntactic signals in various languages to serve as foregrounding and backgrounding devices, see Hopper (1977, 1979).
21. This is an excerpt from the story Yào 'Medicine,' written by Lu Xun in 1919.

22. Among the other three instances, two involve the use of monosyllabic verbs and one represents the first event in a series. As we will see in Chapter III, monosyllabic verbs in Mandarin tend to occur with the suffix -le to recount past happenings. Furthermore, the first event in a discourse segment also tends (though not as frequently) to be marked by the suffix.
23. The fact that the verbs diǎnshàng 'light up' and míman 'fill with' tend to collocate in Chinese narrative discourse is also relevant to the non-use of -le in (c). See further discussion in Section 3.3.2 of Chapter III.
24. See section 3.3.1 for the definition of "peak" and the use of -le as an explicit morphosyntactic marker for "peak" events in Chinese narrative discourse.
25. The use of -le in these samples further shows that Andreasen's claim that the suffix is rendered unnecessary by the presence of "perfectivizing verbal complements" is not entirely correct. For example, in (2.106), -le is used in spite of the presence of the resultative verbal complement man 'full.' As we will see in later chapters, the peak event of a discourse segment, as a rule, is marked by -le, whether the predicate of the clause contains a perfectivizing verbal complement or not.

CHAPTER III

EXPLORING THE DISCOURSE FUNCTIONS OF LE

In the preceding chapters, we saw that previous studies on LE do not provide an adequate account of this quite perplexing particle in Mandarin Chinese. Most of them are confined to the traditional sentential analysis and fail to examine how LE is actually used in a broader context. For those which do go beyond the sentence level to examine its occurrence in discourse, e.g. Spanos (1979), Li and Thompson (1981), and Andreasen (1981), we found that their explanations fell short of the goals precisely because they were too limited in scope. In this chapter, we will investigate how the particle LE is used by native speakers of Chinese in a fuller discourse context. First we will examine its occurrence in some discourse samples. From that we will propose an initial hypothesis as to how LE functions in a discourse context.

Section 3.1 below presents a brief account of the data we collected. In Sections 3.2 and 3.3, the occurrences of the suffix -le in our data are examined and the functions it serves in a narrative discourse are explored. The discourse functions of the sentence-final le are discussed in Section 3.4.

3.1 The Data

To determine how LE is actually used by native speakers of Chinese, we examined its occurrence in several discourse samples, both expository and narrative. For example, we randomly selected five news items, two editorials, and five short stories from the Central Daily News (Overseas edition) and counted the occurrences of LE in this assortment of data. We found that in the five news items we examined, which have a total of approximately 5,500 running characters, LE occurs only thirty-nine times (0.7%). Of these instances of LE, the clearly identifiable verbal suffix -le occurs thirty-six times. The sentence-final le occurs only twice, and the other instance cannot be unambiguously identified as either the suffix -le or the sentence-final le.

Furthermore, in the two editorials we examined, which contain a total of about 3,500 running characters, there are only four occurrences of LE (a little over 0.1%). All these instances of LE can be unambiguously identified as the suffix -le.

The news items and editorials we studied are expository in nature, and as the percentage figures indicate, there are very few instances of LE in this type of writing. With respect to the suffix -le, we found that it is typically used to recount past happenings, for example,

- (3.1) Xiàwǔ yìshí búdào, yìqúnqún
 afternoon one-o'clock not-arrive one-group-group
 hǎiwài Zhōnghuá érǔ cōng sìmiànbāfāng
 overseas Chinese descendants from everywhere
 yǒngdào-le Zhōngguō-chéng.
 swarm-arrive-le China-town

(CDN, Oct. 15, 1985, p. 1)¹

'Before 1:00 p.m., groups of overseas Chinese (descendants), coming from everywhere, swarmed into Chinatown.'

One of the two instances of the sentence-final le we located in news items occurs at the end of the news report, as in

- (3.2) "Lǎobǎn shàngxué" yǐ shì dāngqián
 boss go-to-school already be present
 bìyāozhǐjǔ, méi-yǒu-shénmo-xīqí le.
 necessity no-big-deal le

(CDN, Oct. 15, 1985, p. 1)

'"For bosses to go to school" (to broaden their management know-how) is a necessity at the present time. It is no big deal (now).'

The sentence-final le in (3.2) seems to serve two functions. First of all, it indicates a change from the previous state in which bosses rarely went to (night) schools to broaden their knowledge, to the present state in which it has become a necessity for them to do so. Secondly, it serves to wrap up the entire report: without it, the report sounds incomplete and the readers are left, as it were, "hanging in mid-air."

The occurrences of LE in the news items and editorials we examined, however, are too sparse and the samples containing these instances are too segmented to be very revealing about the discourse functions it serves in a

Chinese passage. This is particularly true in the case of the suffix -le. To understand how LE functions in a discourse context, we turn to its occurrence in short stories which are narrative in nature.

We examined the occurrence of LE in nine short stories. Five are randomly selected from the Central Daily News and the other four from two popular reading texts for foreign students: Huángliáng Mèng ('Golden Millet Dream') and Jīchǔ Hànyǔ Kèběn ('Elementary Chinese Readers').

In the five newspaper short stories we examined, which have a total of approximately 8,450 running characters, LE occurs 167 times (2%), with the clearly identifiable verbal suffix -le occurring 100 times (1.2%) and the sentence-final le 50 times (0.6%). The other 17 instances (0.2%) of LE cannot be unambiguously identified.

On the other hand, in the four short stories for foreign readers, we found a slightly higher percentage of occurrence of LE: it occurs 25 times in a total of 711 running characters (3.5%). The verbal suffix -le occurs 16 times (2.2%), and the sentence-final le, 4 times (0.6%). The other 5 instances of LE cannot be unambiguously identified.

The occurrence of LE in the short stories we examined reveals much more about how it is used in a Chinese narrative. In the next two sections, we will focus on the verbal suffix -le, examining its occurrences in some

representative samples and investigating the functions it serves in Chinese narrative discourse.

3.2 The Verbal Suffix -le²

In this section, we will examine the occurrence of the suffix -le in Chinese narrative discourse. We will first discuss the positions where the suffix tends to occur in a narrative (Section 3.2.1) and then examine the cases where it could but does not occur (Section 3.2.2). Furthermore, in Section 3.2.3, we will look into some constructions which seem to be incompatible with the suffix -le.

3.2.1 Where -Le Occurs

The verbal suffix -le tends to occur in the following positions:

- (A) Toward the end of a major break in the event line, as in (3.3) and (3.4) below:

- (3.3) a. Zhèijiàn shì bàntuǒ hòu,
 this-M matter settle after
- b. Gūmā xiǎnde hěn xīnwèi,
 aunt appear very relieved
- c. tā cōngcōng wèi wǒ shōushí xíngnáng,
 she hurriedly for I pack baggage
- d. yòu yòng cū báibù bāo-le
 in-addition use coarse white-cloth wrap-le
shíkuài yínyáng jiāogěi wǒ.
 ten-M silver-dollar give-to I

(Gūmā Yú Wǒ)

'After this matter was settled, (my) Aunt appeared greatly relieved. She hurriedly packed (my) baggage for me and in addition handed me ten silver dollars wrapped in coarse white cloth.'

- (3.4) a. Jiāyēmóténg hé Zhúfǎlán yě jiù
Kasyapamatanga and Dharmaraksa also then
zài zhèsuǒ sìyuàn-lǐ chuánshòu
at this-M temple-LOC teach
fójiāng
Buddhist-sutra
- b. cóngcǐ, Báimǎ-sì chéng-le
thereafter white-horse-temple become-le
Zhōngguó fójiào de fāyuándì.
China Buddhism DE source

(Báimǎ Sì)

'Kasyapamatanga and Dharmaraksa then taught the Buddhist sutras in this temple. From then on, the (White-horse) temple became the source of Chinese Buddhism.'

- (B) With a verb denoting that the action/event forms a cause-effect relationship with a following action/event/state, as in (3.5) and (3.6):

- (3.5) a. Dāng wǒ jiǎoxìng kǎoshàng-le Běi-shì
when I luckily admit-le Taipei-city
yīsuǒ shìlǐ gāozhōng
one-M municipal high-school
- b. jiālǐ ránfàng-le yíchuàn biānpào
home-LOC set-off-le one-M fire-cracker
- c. zú zú gāoxìng-le háojǐ tiān.
thoroughly happy-le several day

(Yíkuài Qián)

'When I was, luckily, admitted into a municipal high school in Taipei, my folks set off a string of firecrackers and we were thoroughly immersed in happiness for several days.'

- (3.6) a. Wǒ zài chuángshàng píng tǎng-le
 I at bed-LOC horizontal lie-le
 èrshíyī tiān
 twenty-one day
- b. shāo zìdòng tuī-le
 fever automatic recede-le
- c. ér Gūmā què shòu de tuō-le xíng.
 yet aunt conversely thin DE lose-le shape

(Gūmā Yú Wǒ)

'I laid (horizontally) in bed for twenty-one days. The fever went away automatically. Yet Aunt was in a bad shape because of weight loss.'

(C) With monosyllabic (action/event) verbs, as in

(3.7) and (3.8):

- (3.7) a. Nǐ Sānshú yǐjīng dào-le Guìlín
 your third-uncle already arrive-le Guilin
- b. Wǒ yào bǎ nǐ sòngdào Guìlín qù.
 I will BA you send-to Guilin go

(Gūmā Yú Wǒ)

'Your Third-Uncle has already arrived in Guilin, (so) I want to send you there.'

- (3.8) a. Dì-èr-tiān wǔ-hòu, wǒ shàng yóujú
 the-next-day afternoon I to post-office
 qù lǐng-le qián
 go get-le money
- b. zài tàiyáng shài-zhe de dàjiē-shàng
 at sun shine-ZHE DE big-street-LOC
 zǒu-le yíhǔěr,
 walk-le a-while
- c. huér juéde shēn-shàng jiù línchū-le
 suddenly feel body-LOC then ooze-le
 xuduō hàn lái.
 a-lot-of sweat come

(Chūnfēng Chénzuì de Wǎnshàng)

'In the afternoon of the following day, (after) I went to the post-office to get the money, I walked for a while on the sun-drenched street. Suddenly, I felt I was sweating all over.'

3.2.2 Where -Le Could But Does Not Occur

Another outstanding fact about -le in narrative discourse is that there are many potential positions where it could occur but does not. The -le's in the parentheses below indicate such positions:

- (3.9) a. Gūmā cóng xìn-lǐ chōuchū(-le) yìzhāng
 aunt from letter-LOC pull-out(-le) one-M
 zhàopiàn
 photo
- b. dìgēi(-le) wǒ--guǒrán shì fùqīn yǔ yíwèi
 hand-to(-le) I indeed be father and one-M
 nǚshì de hézhào.
 lady DE duo-photo

(Gūmā Yú Wǒ)

'(My) Aunt pulled a photo out of the envelope and handed it to me--indeed it was a photo of my father with a lady (friend).'

- (3.10) a. Tāmen dài huí(-le) fójiāng yǐhòu,
 they bring-back(-le) Buddhist-sutra after
- b. Míng-dì wèi-le³ zhǔcáng zhèibù
 Ming-emperor for-the-sake-of preserve this-M
 zhēnguì de fójiào jīngdiǎn
 precious DE Buddhism sutra-classic
- c. biàn mínglǐng(-le) gōngjiàng fǎngzhào Yìndù
 then order-le craftsman copy India
 fójiào sìyuàn de shìyàng
 Buddhism temple DE style
- d. xiūjiàn-le yìsuǒ sìyuàn.
 build-le one-M temple

(Báimǎ Sì)

'After they brought back the Buddhist sutras, Emperor Ming, in order to preserve these precious volumes, ordered his craftsmen to build a temple in the style of Indian Buddhist temples.'

It is worth noting here that the insertion of -le in each of the potential positions in (3.9) and (3.10) would by no means render the clauses unacceptable. As will be seen in Section 3.3.1, the non-use of -le in these positions is not at all random and in fact is well-motivated on discourse grounds.

Before discussing the implications of the actual and potential occurrences of -le in the discourse samples examined, it is fitting to report another significant fact, namely, the non-use of the suffix in certain types of constructions.

3.2.3 Where -Le Would Not Occur

In the data examined, certain types of constructions were found which seem to be incompatible with the verbal suffix -le:

- (A) Verbs with a resultative complement introduced by de, as in (3.11):

- (3.11) Yíxiàng chéngjìng de xiǎo chéng, biàn(*-le)
 generally quiet DE small city become
 de luànghōnghōng bùshēngfùhè.
 DE messy-noisy unbearable

(Gūmā Yú Wǒ)

'The small town, usually peaceful and quiet, became unbearably noisy and messy.'

(B) Verbs of saying or asking followed by a direct or indirect quote, as in (3.12) and (3.13):

- (3.12) a. Hēizi de niáng shāoshāo chénmò-le yìhuǒr
Heizi DE mother a-little silent-le a-while
- b. bǎ kuàngdēng dīgěi zhàngfū
BA mine-lamp hand-to husband
- c. yòu zhǔfù shuō(*-le): "Míngtiān
then remindingly say tomorrow
lǐng bù lǐng miànfěn, dōu zǎo
receive not receive flour all early
diǎr huílái."
a-little return

(Kuàngshān Fēngyún)

'Heizi's mother remained silent for a while. (Then) she handed the miner's lamp to her husband. Remindingly, she said, "Whether or not you get the flour tomorrow, (try to) get back earlier."'

- (3.13) a. Dì-èr-tiān Míng-dì wèn(*-le)
the-next-day Ming-emperor ask
dàchén, zhè shì zěnmē yìhuí shì
minister this be how-come one-M matter
- b. yíwèi dàchén shuō(*-le), nà shì fó
one-M minister say that be Buddha
de fǎlì.
DE power

(Báimǎ Sì)

'The next day, the Emperor Ming asked (his) ministers what that was all about. One of them told him that Buddha was showing his powers.'

(C) Expressions with some classical flavor, as in (3.14):

- (3.14) Jǐge yuè hòu, wǒ suí Sānshū quán
some-M month after I with third-uncle whole
jiā zì Hǎinán dǎo rù(*-le) Tái.
family from Hainan island enter Taiwan

(Gūmā Yú Wǒ)

'Several months later, I went to Taiwan from Hainan Island with (my) Third-Uncle's family.'

In (3.14), if the phrase rù Tái 'entering Taiwan' is replaced by a more colloquial expression such as dào Táiwān, then -le can be used, as in dào-le Táiwān. Other examples are yǐnqì(*-le) bùzhǐ 'sobbing without stop' and rú quánshuǐ bān yǒng(*-le) chū 'oozing out like spring water.'⁴

3.3 Exploring the Discourse Functions of the Suffix -Le

The facts observed in the previous sections regarding the actual occurrence and non-occurrence of the suffix -le are by no means random. In fact they can be placed on a more principled basis if the discourse functions of this suffix are properly understood. This section explores the functions of -le in Chinese narrative discourse.

3.3.1 The Peak and -Le

It was pointed out earlier that the suffix -le tends to occur toward the end of a major break in the event line. This fact may be given a natural explanation if one assumes that one of the discourse functions of -le is to mark the peak clause of a discourse segment. Following Hinds (1979), we define "peak" as "a sentence of particular semantic importance within a segment." A segment, according to Hinds, is a constituent which stands between a paragraph and each individual sentence. It is a discourse unit which maintains a uniform orientation. Within each segment, there

is typically one sentence which is functionally most prominent. Hinds calls such a sentence the "peak" in a segment of discourse. He further notes that the peak sentence within a segment is usually marked with some morphosyntactic device(s). For example, in Japanese procedural discourse, the culminating (i.e. the peak) event is marked with a finite verb whereas the preliminary (i.e. the non-peak) events in a segment are marked with either a stem or a particle (ga or to). One of the discourse functions -le serves in Chinese narrative is to mark the peak clause of a segment, much like the use of a finite verb form in Japanese procedural discourse.

This seems to be a consequence of the nature of language. That is, Mandarin Chinese, even more than English, favors a linear sequencing that follows the temporal or logical order of events (cf. (3.17) and (3.18) below). Tai's (1985) study of the temporal sequence and Chinese word order further confirms our observation. For example, in the so-called "serial verb constructions" in Mandarin, two or more verb phrases are juxtaposed without overt connectives between them. The juxtaposition, however, is by no means random. The verb phrases in fact are ordered according to their temporal order in the conceptual world. This explains why (3.15a) is a perfectly grammatical sentence but (3.15b) is not.⁵

- (3.15) a. Zhāngsān shàng-lóu shuì-jìào.
VP1 VP2
Zhangsan ascend-stairs sleep-sleep
'Zhangsan went upstairs to sleep.'
- b. *Zhāngsān shuì-jìào shàng-lóu.
VP1 VP2

On the other hand, both sentences in (3.16) are grammatical since the two verb phrases can have either order with different interpretations in temporal sequence:

- (3.16) a. Zhāngsān dào-túshūguǎn ná-shū.
 VP1 VP2
 Zhangsan arrive-library get-book
 'Zhangsan went to the library to get the book.'
- b. Zhāngsān ná-shū dào-túshūguǎn.
 VP1 VP2
 Zhangsan get-book arrive-library
 'Zhangsan took the book to the library.'

The fact that the order of the English clauses in (3.17) would be very awkward, if not impossible, in Chinese lends further support to our observation:

- (3.17) a. Come by my place after you have visited
with him.
- b. He flunked because he didn't study hard
enough.

At best, such second clauses in Chinese sound like after-thoughts added to the main idea expressed in the first clause. To get a proper translation of (3.17), we would have to reverse the order of the two clauses, as in (3.18):

- (3.18) a. Nǐ kàn-le tā, (jiù) dào wǒ jiā lái.
you visit-le he (then) to I home come

- b. Yīnwèi tā bú gòu yònggōng, (suǒyǐ)
 because he not enough studious (so)
 kǎo huài le.
 take-exam bad le

The foregoing discussion suggests that the natural order in Mandarin Chinese necessitates marking the last clause in a sequence of events as the most salient or prominent part in the event line. An overt morphosyntactic signal to mark the most salient event in Chinese narrative, as pointed out earlier, is the suffix -le. The following samples illustrate this use of -le:

- (3.19) a. Yúshì, Míng-dì biàn pàiqiǎn 0
 consequently Ming-emperor then send
 Cǎiyīn hé Qínjīng liǎngge guānyuán dào
 Caiyin and Qinjing two-M official to
 Yìndù qù qiúqǔ fójīng
 India go search Buddhist-sutra
- b. tāmen zǒudào 0 xiànzài Āfùhàn de yíge
 they walk-to now Afghanistan DE one-M
 dìfāng
 place
- c. dédào-le fó-jīng hé fó
 acquire-le Buddhist-sutra and Buddhist
 xiàng
 statue

(Báimǎ Sì)

'Thereupon, Emperor Ming sent two officials, Caiyin and Qinjing, to India to search for the Buddhist Sutras. When they came to a place known today as Afghanistan, they found the Sutras and Statues.'

- (3.20) a. Jìnnián lái suízhe Zhōng-wài
 recent-year-come along-with Sino-foreign
 wénhuà jiāoliú shìyè de fāzhǎn
 culture exchange business DE development

- b. Běijīng Kǎoyā hé 'Quán-Jū-Dé'
 Beijing roast-duck and Quan-Ju-De
 diànhào yě piāo Ø yáng guō Ø hǎi⁶
 store-name also float ocean cross sea
- c. chuándào Ø guówài
 transmit country-outside
- d. zhèi jiù shǐ gèngduō de rén
 this then make even-more DE people
 chángdào-le wèi-xiāng-sè-měi
 taste-le delicious-and-splendid-looking
 de Běijīng Kǎoyā le.
 DE Beijing roast-duck le

(Běijīng Kǎoyā)

'Recently, along with the cultural exchange between China and other countries, the Peking Roast Duck and Quan-Ju-De, crossing the seas and oceans, went abroad. This made it possible for more people to (be able to) taste the delicious and splendid-looking Peking Roast Duck.'

In these samples, the positions marked with Ø are the potential slots for the suffix -le to occur. However, as the samples show, -le occurs only with the last action/event verb which represents the culminating event in a sequence of events narrated in (3.19) and (3.20). This confirms our observation that -le serves as an overt marker for the peak event in a segment of Chinese narrative discourse. The fact that the potential -le's are withheld in these samples further suggests that in Chinese narrative, a segment of discourse which maintains a uniform orientation may contain only one peak marked by -le. This explains why the suffix does not always occur where it could, as pointed out in (3.9) and (3.10).

The use of -le in samples (3.19) and (3.20) shows further that Andreasen's (1981) treatment of the suffix as marking the foregrounded events in a Chinese narrative is not entirely correct. The suffix does indeed occur in the foregrounded clauses of a narrative. However, not all foregrounded clauses are marked by -le. The suffix is in fact reserved for use with the main verb in those clauses representing the peak event of a discourse segment. This explains why if -le were used in each clause in these two samples, they would sound very "choppy." Such use amounts to marking every single clause as equally prominent in weight and is thus disfavored by mature speakers of the language.⁷

3.3.2 Anteriority and -Le

We saw earlier that the suffix -le tends to occur with a verb which communicates an action that is in a cause-effect relationship with a following action/event/state, as in (3.5) and (3.6). This use of -le to mark a cause-effect relationship can be accounted for by broadening the definition of anteriority to include both temporal and logical relations. Take sample (3.5), for instance. Without the first two -le's, the passage in (3.5) would represent three separate events in a sequence with the last one as the culmination. That is, the author was first (luckily) admitted into a municipal high school in Taipei,

then his folks set off a string of firecrackers, and the entire family was thoroughly immersed in happiness for several days. The three events, however, would seem to have just happened one after another, because the verbs representing the events, namely, kǎoshàng 'admitted to,' ránfàng 'set off,' and gāoxìng 'happy' are not cohesive in the sense that they do not meet any of the three lexical cohesive criteria discussed in Halliday (1985: 310-318).

Halliday holds that one of the ways by which a speaker or writer creates cohesion in discourse is his choice of lexical items.⁸ He discusses three types of lexical cohesion. The first is repetition, which he considers to be the most direct form of lexical cohesion.⁹ For example, in

(3.21) Algy met a bear. The bear was bulgy.

the second occurrence of bear "harks back," as it were, to the first one.

Lexical cohesion is also achieved through synonymy, i.e. the choice of a lexical item that is in some sense synonymous with a preceding one, e.g. sound with noise, and cavalry with horses in (3.22):¹⁰

(3.22) He was just wondering which road to take when he was startled by a noise from behind him. It was the noise of trotting horses. . . . He dismounted and led his horse as quickly as he could along the right-hand road. The sound of the cavalry grew rapidly nearer. . .

Another type of lexical cohesion is collocation, in which cohesion is achieved through a particular association

between the items in question--a tendency to co-occur. The following example is excerpted from Halliday (1985: 312):

- (3.23) A little fat man of Bombay
 Was smoking one very hot day.
 But a bird called a snipe
 Flew away with his pipe.
 Which vexed the fat man of Bombay.

Halliday holds that what makes the occurrence of pipe in line four of this sample cohesive is the strong collocational bond between smoke and pipe.

If we now re-examine the samples in (3.19) and (3.20), we find that the verbs in these samples are cohesive, in the sense that they meet the criteria of collocation and synonymy. For example, in (3.19), the verbs pàiqiǎn 'send (to)', dào 'go to' and zǒudào 'arrive in/at' bear a strong collocational bond and thus tend to co-occur in a narrative. By the same token, qiúqǔ 'search (for)' and dédào 'acquire' also tend to collocate. Synonymy is shown in the co-occurrence of piǎoyáng 'floating the oceans' and guòhǎi 'crossing the seas' in (3.20). Furthermore, these two verb phrases co-occur with the verb chuándào 'transmit': a clear case of collocation. It is worth noting that in these cases where the verbs exhibit lexical cohesion, the potential le's are all withheld. The first two -le's in sample (3.5), therefore, serve to overtly mark both the temporal and logical orders of the events expressed in the passage.

Let us now examine the occurrences of -le in sample (3.6). We notice, first of all, that the verbs tǎng 'lie,' tuì 'recede,' and tuō 'lose' do not meet any of the lexical cohesion criteria mentioned above. The use of the first two -le's is thus necessary to string together the temporal as well as the logical orders of the three otherwise separate events. That is, the fever went away because of the author's having stayed in bed for twenty-one days. Yet, after the fever was gone, her aunt was in pretty bad shape (since during the period in which she was confined to bed and struggling with the fever, her aunt had to look after her, day and night). Examples abound where -le is used to mark a cause-effect relationship, as in (3.24) and (3.25) below:

- (3.24) Jiā-lǐ suī qióng, yě hěnxìaxīn
 home-LOC although poor yet cruel-decide-mind
 chòu-le shíkuài qián, gěi wǒ mǎi-le
 pull-together-le ten-M dollar for I buy-le
 shuāng biējiǎo de píxié.
 M cheap DE leather-shoe

(Yíkuài Qián)

'Although we were poor, (my parents) nevertheless came to the difficult decision. (They) pulled together ten dollars and bought me a cheap pair of shoes.'

- (3.25) Jǐ nián zhīhòu, Zhūgēliàng de zhèncè
 few year after Zhugeliang DE policy
 dàjiǎnchéngxiào, Shǔguó huīfù-le yuánqì
 greatly-effective Shu-kingdom recover-le spirit
 bīngqiáng mǎzhuàng, liángshí
 soldier-strong horse-sturdy food
 chōngzú.
 sufficient

(Zhongguo Chengyu Gushi)

'A few years later, Zhugeliang's policy proved to be greatly effective. The Kingdom of Shu recuperated, with its soldiers stout, horses strong, and food supplies abundant.'

3.3.3 Requirement of -Le with Monosyllabic Verbs

We observed earlier that the suffix -le tends to occur with monosyllabic (action/event) verbs, as in (3.7) and (3.8) above. This tendency for monosyllabic verbs to be suffixed with -le is accountable if the semantics of the Chinese action verbs is properly understood.

In general, action verbs in Chinese do not express the attainment of goal unless accompanied by the so-called "resultative complements."¹¹ Thus while the achievement of goal is implicit in English verbs such as 'to build' and 'to find,' their Chinese equivalents are verb-compounds of the action-result type, e.g. gài-hǎo 'build-finished' and zhǎo-dào 'search-reach,' and not simply gài and zhǎo, which do not imply the attainment of goal. Other examples showing this simple-action and action-result contrast are kàn 'to look' vs. kànjiàn 'to see' and tīng 'to listen' and tīngjiàn 'to hear.' In fact, as Chu (1976) points out, simple action verbs in Chinese do not even presuppose an active attempt without any aspect marker, as in (3.26):

- (3.26) Nǐ kàn zhèiběn shū, wǒ kàn nàiběn shū.
you read this-M book I read that-M book

'You read this book, and I (will) read that book.'

The persons involved in (3.26) may or may not actually read or attempt to read the books concerned. Chu further notes that one of the ways in which the actual performance (though not necessarily the result) of action is overtly marked is through the use of the suffix -le, as in

- (3.27) Wǒ xiě-le yìfēng xìn, kěshì méi xiěwán.
I write-le one-M letter but not write-end

'I wrote a letter but haven't finished it yet.'

It is thus natural, then, for monosyllabic action/event verbs, which are by nature simple ones, to combine with the suffix -le to recount what (has) happened. Since this use of -le is basically for marking events that happened at some point in the past (as in (3.8)), have just happened prior to the moment of speech (as in (3.7)), or are still in the process of occurring (as in (3.27)), it functions very much like a marker of "realis."¹² This use of -le occurs in all types of writing, in all positions of a discourse, and even in the title of a popular Chinese movie:

- (3.28) Huá Dà mā zài zhěntou dǐxià, tāo-le bàn-tiān,
Hua Dama at pillow under grope-le half-day
tāochū yìbǎo yángqián, jiāogěi-le [tā].
pull-out one-M silver-dollar give-to-le [ta]

(Yào)

'Hua Dama groped under the pillow for a long time, pulled out a packet of silver dollars and gave (it) to [him].'

- (3.29) Zhèige cūn qùnián huā-le sān-wàn
this-M village last-year spend-le thirty-
duō yuán, gǎi-le shíjiān fáng,
thousand more dollar build-le ten-M house
bānqǐ xuéqián-bān hé xiǎoxué-bān.
start pre-school-class and primary-school-class

(PD, Sep. 5, 1984, p. 1)

'Last year, this village spent more than 30,000 dollars to build ten rooms and started pre-school classes and an elementary school.'

(3.30) "Wǒ Jiù Zhèiyàng Guò-le Yìshēng"
I then this-manner pass-le one-life

(as the title of a Chinese movie)

"In This Way, I Have Spent My Whole Life."

3.3.4 The Non-Occurrence of -Le

We observed in Section 3.2.3 the non-occurrence of the suffix -le with verbs of saying and asking when followed by a quote (as in (3.12) and (3.13)) or with verbs followed by "de + resultative complement" (as in (3.11)). The verbs in both structures can be legitimately considered non-peak elements. The peak in fact is what follows the verb. A similar claim for the resultative complement was first made in Tai and Chen (1974) in which syntactic evidence is presented to support their argument that "the center of predication in an RV [i.e. resultative complement] falls not on the first verbal element which indicates an action, but on the second verbal part which states the result of that action" (p. 3). This explains why in RV constructions such as chī-bǎo 'eat-full' (i.e. full from eating) and hē-zuì 'drink-drunk' (i.e. drunk through drinking), the action verbs chī and hē can be deleted without affecting the function or meaning of the construction. It also explains why in a question sentence with chī-bǎo or hē-zuì, as in Nǐ

chī-bǎo méiyǒu? 'Are you full (from eating)?' or Tā hē-zuì méiyǒu? 'Is he drunk (through drinking)?' the questioned part is always bǎo and zuì and not chī and hē. The present claim is thus an extension of Tai and Chen's from a syntactic to a discourse perspective.¹³

The verbs of saying/asking seem to present a problem, especially in view of Halliday's formulation (1985: 227-234) of indirect speech ("reporting" in his terms) having a hypotactic (i.e. subordinate) structure as opposed to direct speech ("quoting" in his terms) having a paratactic (i.e. coordinate) structure. However, there is no reason why both direct and indirect speech in Chinese cannot be seen as carrying equal prominence in terms of information content, compared with the verb that introduces them. In this sense, verbs of saying/asking may very well be in a non-peak position if the quoted direct speech or reported indirect speech is the peak. For example,

- (3.31) Gūmā xīngfènde jǐnwò-zhe láixìn,
 aunt excitedly tight-hold-ZHE come-letter
 qín-zhe lèishuǐ, duì wǒ shuō Ø:
 hold-ZHE tears to I say
 "Yúnyún, zhēn shì tiānyì! Nǐ Sānshú
 Yunyun indeed be heaven-will you third-uncle
 yǐjīng dào-le Guìlín. . ."
 already arrive-le Guilin

(Gūmā Yú Wǒ)

'Excitedly, Aunt held the letter tight and with tears held-back in her eyes, said to me:
 "Yunyun, this is indeed God's will! Your Third Uncle has already arrived in Guilin. . ."

However, it is not completely impossible for the suffix -le to occur with verbs of saying/asking followed by a quote, as in

- (3.32) X gāosù-le tāmen: "Sānbǎi-kuài qián lián
 X tell-le they three-hundred-M dollars even
 mǎi fēijī-piào dōu bú gòu."
 buy plane-ticket all not enough

'X told them that three-hundred dollars isn't even enough for the airfare.'

The sample in (3.32) is Professor Chu's response to his wife's inquiry as to why he received a check for \$350 instead of the \$300, which had been promised as an honorarium for a talk in Houston. Contextually speaking, though, the use of -le after the verb gāosù 'tell' in this sample seems to mark a cause-effect relationship, i.e. as a result of X's telling them (about the fact that \$300 would not cover the airfare), a check of \$350 was sent instead of the originally promised \$300.

As for the lesser degree of compatibility of the suffix -le with expressions having a classical flavor such as rù Tái 'entering Taiwan' (cf. (3.14)), we think that this is a natural consequence of the late emergence of the suffix in the history of the Chinese language.¹⁴ A textual study of Wang's (1944) Readings in Traditional Chinese further confirms this. The anthology contains 220 essays, stories, and poems, ranging from the fifth century B.C. to the twelfth century A.D. However, not a single instance of -le

is used in these writings, since they are all written in the classical style.

3.3.5 The Discourse Functions of the Suffix -le: An Initial Formulation

Based on our examination of discourse samples in the preceding sections, we now propose a tripartite hypothesis for the functions of the Mandarin verbal suffix -le:

- (A) It serves as a marker of "realis," denoting an action/event that (had) happened, has happened, or is happening.
- (B) In terms of discourse, it functions as an overt morphosyntactic signal for the peak event within a segment of discourse.
- (C) In terms of sequencing of events, it serves to explicitly mark the anteriority, temporal and logical, of an action/event in relation to another.

Certain modifications, however, have to be incorporated in this initial formulation of the functions of -le in discourse. For example, we have seen that while action verbs in a phrase with a classical flavor are in general not compatible with this suffix, monosyllabic action verbs require its presence. Furthermore, anteriority tends to be explicitly marked by -le when the verbs in a series of clauses are not cohesive enough to indicate such a natural sequence and/or when a special emphasis on the order of events is called for.

3.4 Exploring the Discourse Functions of the Sentence-Final Le¹⁵

In this section the occurrence of the sentence-final le in Chinese discourse is examined, focusing first on the positions where it tends to occur and those where it could occur but does not. Then, a hypothesis regarding the functions le serves in Chinese narrative discourse is put forth.

3.4.1 Where Le Occurs

In the data we collected, the sentence-final le occurs rather infrequently in news items and editorials (in fact only two clear cases of le are identified). This low frequency of occurrence is also observed by Li and Thompson (1981: 290-291), who point out that "le is generally not used in written expository or descriptive prose, and it is rare in formal spoken-language situations such as news reports, speeches, lectures, and proclamations." On the other hand, the occurrence of le in short stories in newspapers and those for foreign readers is comparatively higher (a total of 54 occurrences). This makes it possible to gain a better insight into what functions le serves in a written narrative and to investigate what factors influence its use or non-use in Chinese narrative discourse.

In the samples we examined, the sentence-final le typically was found to occur in positions where a "change of state" meaning is involved. For example,

- (3.33) Shíkuài qián zài nàshí yǐ
 ten-M dollars at that-time already
 xiàbùdǎo xiāngxià xiǎo háiizi le.
 cannot-frighten country small children le

(Yíkuài Qián)

'At that time, ten dollars was no longer a big deal (even) to kids in the country-side.'

In (3.33), the use of le denotes a "change of state," i.e. while formerly the amount of ten dollars had meant a great deal to kids, this was no longer true at the time when the author entered high school. The use of le to indicate a "change of state" reading is also seen in (3.34) below:

- (3.34) Rúguǒ mǔqīn hái huózhe, rúguǒ tā lǎo
 if mother still live-ZHE if she old
 rénjiā yǒu jīhuì kàndào, yě yíding huì
 person have chance see also surely will
 lǒuzhe báifǎnbān de érzi tòngkǔ. . .
 embrace-ZHE white-hair-ish DE son cry-bitterly
 kǎixī zhè dōu biànchéng "guòqù" le.
 pity this all become past le

(Wǒde Pò Máoyī)

'If (my) mother were still alive, if she had the chance to read (this article), she would surely hold in her arms this gray-haired son of hers and cry loudly. . . . Unfortunately, this has become (a thing of) "past".'

In (3.34), the author is lamenting the passing away of his mother, who is unable to read the article he wrote in memory of her. The use of le here clearly indicates a "change of state," i.e. since his mother is no longer alive, every effort devoted to the commemoration of her is futile--a thing of "past."

However, in the data we examined, we found that there are instances of le whose occurrence cannot be accounted for merely on the semantic grounds of "change of state." The sample in (3.35) illustrates this.

- (3.35) Dāng yǎnyuán yìxíng dàodá Mólùogē de-shíhòu
 as actors one-group arrive Morocco when
 wēndù gāodá huáshì yībǎi-sānshí-
 temperature as-high-as Fahrenheit one-hundred-
 sān dù, qiě kàn liǎngwèi
 thirty-three degree let's-wait see two-M
 míng yǐngxīng zhècì rúhé zàidù gòngtóng
 famous movie-star this-time how again together
 fāhuī tāmen de chángcái le.
 stretch they DE talent le

(Níluó Hé De Zhūbǎo)

'When this team of actors and actresses arrived in Morocco, the temperature was as high as 133 degrees Fahrenheit. Let's wait and see how these two famous movie stars (i.e. Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner) would again together put their talents to the best (i.e. to make another big hit as "Romancing the Stone").'

The sample is the concluding portion of a news report on the shooting of the movie: "The Jewel of the Nile." However, it would be incorrect to say that the le in (3.35) expresses "change of state," since the whole context does not agree with this reading. More importantly, without this le, the entire report becomes incomplete and lacks resolution. This le, then, is needed for discourse reasons: it serves as a discourse-final particle, marking the end of a discourse unit. This use of le is also seen in the short stories we examined. For example,

- (3.36) "Cháng jiāng yǒu rì sī wú rì"
 often take-as have day think-of have-not day
 yǒu qián de-shíhòu cháng xiǎngzhe měi
 have money when often think-ZHE not-have
 qián de-shíhòu, búyào luàn huā qián,
 money when don't aimlessly spend money
 zhè suànshì wǒ shùshínián jiānkǔ
 this count-as I several-decades hardship
 gōngdú shēnghuó zhōng de zuìdà xīndé
 work-study life in DE greatest lesson
le.
 le

(Yíkuài Qián)

"In days of abundance, one must constantly think of days of shortage (i.e. In fair weather prepare for the foul)." When one has money, one must often think of days when one hasn't. Never spend money aimlessly. This is the greatest lesson I have learned in the past few decades in which I work-studied to obtain my degrees.'

The samples in this section show that although the sentence-final le is usually found in situations where a "change of state" meaning is involved (e.g. (3.33) and (3.34)), its presence in a narrative cannot be accounted for merely on semantic grounds. As samples (3.35) and (3.36) indicate, sometimes the use of le is motivated on discourse grounds.

3.4.2 Where Le Could Occur But Does Not

Another outstanding fact drawn from the data is that there are many potential positions where the sentence-final le could occur but does not. The le's in parentheses below indicate such positions:

- (3.37) a. Shìshíshàng, nàjiàn máoyī yǐ làn-
 in-fact that-M sweater already rot-
 chéng pǔpiàn (le)
 as broken-pieces (le)

- b. xǐ yě wú fǎ xǐ (le)
wash also no way wash (le)
- c. zāng de bùnéng zài bǎocún (le)
dirty DE cannot again keep (le)
- d. hǎoxiàng jiù yíliú zài Xiǎojīnmén le.
seem then leave at Xiaojinmen le
- (Wǒde Pò Máoyī)

'In fact, that sweater had already rotted into rags. (It) could no longer stand washing. (And it was) so dirty that (it was) not worth keeping (any more). (It) seems that (I) left (it) in Xiaojinmen.'

In this sample, clauses (a)-(c) apparently indicate "change of state," i.e. the sweater had already rotted into rags; it was no longer washable; and it was so dirty that it was not worth keeping any more. Therefore, it is theoretically possible to insert le in each of the potential positions to express a "change of state" meaning. The author, however, chose to withhold its use until the end of clause (d)--the concluding clause of the passage. This tendency to withhold the use of le until the end of a discourse unit is also illustrated in (3.38):

- (3.38) a. Tā huídào Měiguó yǐhòu,
she return-to America after
- b. jiù xīng-le Tiānzhǔjiào (le)
then believe-le Catholicism (le)
- c. yìtiān-yìtiān xiāoshòu (le)
day-in-day-out weak-thin (le)
- d. dào Shèngdànjié de-shíhòu, yǐjīng
to Christmas when already
bùchéngrényàng le.
not-as-human-shape le
- (Zuórì Zhī Yuē)

'After she returned to the U.S., she became a Catholic. (But) as the days went by, she grew more and more emaciated. When Christmas came, she was (so thin and so weak that she looked) like a skeleton.'

The non-use of le in the potential positions in (3.37) and (3.38) further confirms its function as a discourse-final particle in Mandarin Chinese. The insertion of le in these positions, though well-motivated on semantic grounds, is inappropriate in terms of the over-all discourse structure. In fact, if le were inserted in each of the potential positions, the passages would become "choppy" and the smooth flow of each passage would be severely impeded.

3.4.3 Factors Affecting the Use of Le in Discourse

Our study of the sentence-final le in the preceding sections in fact strongly supports the findings reported in Chang (1982), which, after examining a substantial number of discourse samples, both spoken and written, proposes that le be better understood as a discourse-final particle rather than simply a marker of "change of state." As a discourse-final particle, le typically occurs at the end of a discourse block and serves as a boundary marker between discourse units.

A discourse unit, however, is a relative term. Chang observes that perceptual differences exist among native speakers as to what constitutes a discourse unit. For example, (3.39) below is one of the twelve test items given

to twenty-six native speakers of Chinese who participated in a survey conducted to determine the contemporary use of the sentence-final le. The first figure in each blank indicates the obligatory and the second, the optional use of le by the respondents. The author's use of le is represented by spelling it out, as in clause (g).

- (3.39) a. Zài jìngxuǎn huódòng wèi kāishǐ qián
at election campaign not begin before
- b. xíng-xíng-sè-sè de xuǎnjǔ xiànxàng
a-great-variety DE election phenomenon
yǐjīng chūxiàn zài shìmiànshàng .73/.08
already appear at public-LOC
- c. xiāngxìn zài jìngxuǎn huódòng kāishǐ hòu
believe at election campaign begin after
- d. jiāng yǒu gèng biǎomiàn huà de jīngcǎi
will have more surface-ize DE exciting
huàzhāo .00/.00
trick
- e. zhèi dàibiǎo-le míngzhǔzhèngzhì de yí-
this represent-le democracy DE one-
miàn
facet
- f. hái yǒu liǎng tiān .42/.12
still have two day
- g. dàjiā kěyǐ shì-mù-yǐ-dài
everyone can wipe-eye-in-expectation
le .08/.12
le

(Xuǎnjǔ Qiánhòu)

'Before the election campaign begins, various activities of election have already appeared before (the eyes of) the public. It is believed that after the election campaign actually starts, there will be more (campaign) tricks emerging. This represents one facet of democracy. There are two more days (left). Every one of us

can wipe our eyes in expectation (i.e. keep our eyes wide open).'

This passage appeared in a newspaper report on the pre-election campaigning of the candidates for membership on the Taipei City Council. The author first reported many aspects of the campaigning before coming to sample (3.39), the concluding part of the report. Although there are four positions for the potential use of le in this passage, the author chose to use it only after shǐ-mù-yǐ-dài 'keep eyes wide open' in clause (g). This passage-final use of le confirms our analysis of le as a discourse-final particle in Mandarin Chinese. However, as the percentage figures show, the respondents differ drastically from the author in the use of le in this passage, specifically in clauses (b), (f), and (g).

Chang's explanation for the divergence between the author's and the respondents' use of le is as follows. First of all, the fact that a great majority of respondents (.73/.08) inserted le at the end of clause (b) can be accounted for, if the over-all structure of the passage is examined in greater detail. The passage in fact falls into two topical units: one consists of clauses (a)-(e), which gives the author's viewpoint of what stands for one of the many facets of true democracy; and the other consists of clauses (f) and (g), about the fact that there are only two days left (before the official election campaigning actually starts) and the author's reminder to the reader that

everyone should keep their eyes wide open (in expectation of what is to come). Within the first unit, a contrast is made between what has already happened in the pre-election campaigning (i.e. clauses (a) and (b)) and what is predicted to happen after the official campaigning actually starts (i.e. clauses (c) and (d)). Clause (b), therefore, is a likely position for the use of le. This explains why a great majority of the respondents inserted one in that place. It was used as a boundary marker between topical events within a discourse unit.

In clause (f), a relatively significant number of respondents (.42/.12) inserted le after liǎng tiān 'two days.' At first glance, it seems that le was used to express "change of state," e.g. the change from, say, a week to only two remaining days before the official election campaigning starts. However, a closer examination of clauses (f) and (g) reveals that a split between these two clauses is indeed possible. Clause (f), as pointed out earlier, is mainly about the two remaining days, whereas in clause (g) the author urges everyone to keep their eyes wide open for future keen competition among the candidates. Therefore, it is highly probable that those respondents who inserted le after liǎng tiān 'two days' were treating the information conveyed by clause (f) as important enough for the clause to constitute an independent topical unit in and of itself, instead of being incorporated into a larger unit

(such as the one consisting of clauses (f) and (g)). A more striking example is cited in Chang (1982:44-45):

(3.40) (In answer to the question why nobody wants to marry a certain lady)

- a. Tā niánjì dà, rén yě chǒu, suǒyǐ méi
 she age big person also ugly so no
 rén yào le.
 man want le

'She is old; she is also ugly; so no one wants (her) now.'

- b. Tā niánjì dà le, rén yě chǒu le,
 she age big le person also ugly le
 suǒyǐ méi rén yào le.
 so no man want le

'She is old (now). What is more, she is/has become ugly (now). So no one wants (her) now.'

Although (3.40a) and (3.40b) can be used as reply to the same question; with the addition of le after dà 'big' and chǒu 'ugly,' (3.40b) puts more emphasis on each individual piece of information. That is, in (3.40b), the first two clauses tā niánjì dà 'her age big' and rén yě chǒu 'person also ugly' each constitutes an independent discourse unit and is equal in weight to the last clause suǒyǐ méi rén yào le 'so no one wants (her) now.' This deliberate use of le to further segment a large discourse unit into smaller ones is commonly observed both in speech and in writing.

With respect to clause (3.39g), where the author used le to conclude the passage and yet only a small number of respondents (.08/.12) used it there, Chang's explanation was that the clause, upon close examination, expresses an

expectation about a future event, i.e. everyone should keep their eyes wide open for the keen competition lying ahead. This suggests that le will not be used when the speaker/writer is expressing a future expectation. The unanimous omission of le after huāzhāo 'trick' in clause (d) can be accounted for in the same way. As pointed out earlier, clauses (3.39c) and (3.39d) constitute a unit of discourse just as clauses (3.39a) and (3.39b) do; therefore, the end of clause (3.39d) is a likely position for the use of le. However, since what is expressed in (3.39d) is the expectation that there will be more exciting tricks (of campaigning) to come, le was unanimously omitted. A parallel example is (3.41):

- (3.41) a. Míngtiān jiù yào kāi jiǎng le
tomorrow then will open prize le
b. qǐng dàjiā gǎnkuài lái mǎi.
please everyone hurry come buy

'The winners will be announced tomorrow.
(I urge that) everyone hurry up and come
(here to) buy (tickets).'

Sample (3.41) is often used by lottery-ticket sellers to urge potential customers to purchase tickets. However, le is not used at the end of clause (b). This example very strongly shows that le is not used when the speaker/writer is expressing an expectation about a future event. For the majority of the respondents, then, clause (3.39g) expresses a future expectation, so le was not used. On the other hand, for the author, le was nevertheless needed in order to

conclude the passage (and, by extensison, the entire report).

As the above samples show, a discourse unit is, in essence, a relative term. It may be as large as a complete story, a chapter, a paragraph, a conversation; or as small as a group of clauses or sentences which make up a topical unit. The fact that a considerable number of respondents inserted le in (3.39b) and (3.39f) indicates that they used it as a marker between (sub-)topical units in the context of (3.39). However, for the author, the passage is treated as an undivided whole. The division of a discourse unit is thus subject to each person's perception of the real world. How different pieces of information are perceived to be closely related enough to constitute a discourse unit varies from person to person and from context to context.¹⁶ The great divergence between the author's and the respondents' use of le in (3.39g) further shows that context plays a significant role in deciding whether it would or would not be used. For the author, who has reported many aspects of the campaigning before coming to sample (3.39), the use of le is necessary as a marker of the end of the entire report. The respondents, on the other hand, did not have the larger context to serve as a guide and opted for its non-use, specifically in view of the fact that a future expectation in general does not allow for the use of le.

Another factor which affects native speakers' use of le in discourse is the presence of connectives which, in essence, serve as discourse-internal ties.¹⁷ For example,

- (3.42) a. Yěxǔ, xìngyùnde zài rénshēng de dìyí-ge
perhaps fortunately at life DE first-M
yìzhàn
stage
- b. jiù yùdào dú-jù-huì-yǎn de
then meet unique-possess-clever-eye DE
Bóle .04/.00
Bole
- c. nà nǐ jiù kěyǐ zōng-héng-qiān-lǐ
that you then can proceed-one-thousand-
 .00/.00 wú-wǎng-bú-lǐ
mile succeed-without-difficulty
le .73/.15.
le

(Lùn Zhīyù)

'Perhaps, at the first stage of your life, you fortunately meet Bole--i.e. the person who can really appreciate your talents. In that case, you can (then) proceed freely and smoothly (in your career) and succeed without any difficulty.'

In (3.42), although it is possible in theory to insert le after Bóle 'Bole' in clause (b), the presence of the connective nà 'in that case' in clause (c) renders the use of le in that position unnecessary. This explains why only 4% of the respondents regarded it necessary and all the rest simply omitted it in clause (b). In the new data we examined, we also found samples in which the potential use of le within a piece of discourse is rendered undesirable by the presence of explicit connectives. For example, the non-use of le after fēn-fēn-chū-lóng 'gaining in number' in

(3.43a) below is accounted for by the presence of the connective yīnér 'as a result' in (3.43b):

- (3.43) a. Jīntiān zài guówài, zhèzhǒng "Módnēng
today at country-out this-M modern
Jiāting" "Diànzǐ Jiāting" yǐjīng
family electric family already
fēn-fēn-chū-lóng le
one-by-one-come-out
- b. miào-shì yě yīnér céng-
wonderful-matters also as-a-result occur-
chū-bù-qióng le
repeatedly
- c. diànyǐng-zhōng de xūhuàn qíngjié
movie-LOC DE illusionary plot
zújiàn xiàndài-shēnghuó-huà le.
gradually modern-life-ize

(CDN Jan. 3, 1986, p. 2)

'Today, in other parts of the world, this type of "Modernized Families" (and) "Electronicized Families" (i.e. families which enjoy modern conveniences due to advanced technology) have been gaining in number. As a result, wonderful things have been repeatedly occurring. The amazing stuff which we thought possible only in movies have gradually become a necessary part of our daily life.'

In the samples we examined, other connectives which serve as discourse-internal ties include wèicǐ 'therefore,' jiùshì 'even if,' suǒyǐ 'so,' biàn 'then,' and yīncǐ 'as a consequence.' As discourse-internal ties, these connectives overtly signal that there is a close relationship between the units they join. Therefore, in the contexts where these connectives occur, the use of le is avoided by native speakers of Mandarin. This also suggests that the more

closely related the units are (under the same topic), the less frequent is the use of le between them.

Let us now examine clause (3.42c), where le is unanimously omitted after zōng-héng-qiān-lǐ 'proceed freely and smoothly.' To begin with, it is structurally possible for le to occur in that position. As a matter of fact, if we leave out wú-wǎng-bú-lì 'succeed without difficulty' in this clause, then le becomes obligatory after zōng-héng-qiān-lǐ, otherwise the whole passage would sound incomplete. Upon close examination, we find that the two expressions zōng-héng-qiān-lǐ and wú-wǎng-bú-lì are closely knit, not only syntactically but also semantically. In fact, they are so parallel in structure and so synonymous in meaning that a split between them is undesirable. As a consequence, neither the author of the paragraph nor the respondents used le between these two expressions. This suggests that semantic and structural parallelisms can serve as discourse-internal ties, thus rendering the use of le unnecessary. Furthermore, the fact that the author himself as well as a significant number of respondents (.73/.15) used le after wú-wǎng-bú-lì at the end of the sample further confirms our analysis of le as a discourse-final particle in Mandarin.

Other factors that tend to affect native speakers' use of le, as reported in Chang (1982), include the style of writing and whether a factual statement is involved.

Examine, for example, the excerpt in (3.44), another test item included in the survey:

- (3.44) a. Mǒmǒ xiōng rú-wò:
so-and-so brother as-shaking-hands

'Mr. So-and-so:'

- b. yì-zhuǎn-yǎn yòu kuài liǎng nián méi
in-a-wink again about two year not
jiàn miàn le .77/.04
see face le

'How time flies! Again it's been almost two years since we last met.'

- c. zhèicì huìyì zhǎoshí máng-le yí-zhèn
this-M conference indeed busy-le a-while

'I've been busy with the conference for quite a while, indeed.'

- d. xiànzài zǒngsuàn kěyǐ luèwéi chuǎnkǒuqì
now finally can somewhat relax
le .69/.15
le

'Now I can finally relax a bit.'

- e. nǐde dànmíng yǐ liè-rù míng-dān
your name already put-into name-list
.08/.04

'You've been added to the name list.'

- f. dāng jiāng gāi xīn míng-dān (shàng
thereupon take that new name-list (also
yǒu qí tā zēngbǔ) yíjiāo gěi xià-jie
have other add) transfer to next-M
zhǔbǎnzhě .08/.00
chairman

'It is incumbent upon me to transfer this new name list (which includes other added members) to the next chairman.'

- g. zuìjìn xiāoxí, tīngshuō tāmen yào jiāng
recent news hear-say they want take
huìqī yíhòu zhǐ jiùyuè-zhōng .00/.00
date postpone till September-mid

'The latest word is that they are going to postpone the conference till mid-September.'

- h. wèicǐ, zé kǒngpà yǒu hěnduō rén wúfǎ
therefore then fear have many man can't
cānjiā le .46/.12
attend le

'Therefore, I'm afraid that there will be many people who cannot attend it.'

- i. zhì-yú wǒ shì fǒ cānjiā, děi kàn xuéxiào
as-to I be not attend must see school
néng fǒ bùzhǔ érdìng .27/.15
can not subsidize decide

'As for myself, my attendance depends on whether the school will subsidize or not.'

The excerpt is the beginning portion of a correspondence between two friends who have not seen each other for almost two years.¹⁸ After a polite, formula-like greeting (clauses (a) and (b)), the author shifts to the main body of the correspondence (clauses (c)-(i)). This division is marked by the author's use of le after jiànmiàn 'meet' in clause (b). This instance of le functions as a boundary marker between topical units, separating the "background" information from the main body of the correspondence. As the percentage figures indicate, the majority of the respondents (.77/.04) agree with the author's use of le as a boundary marker between topical units.

The main body, upon close examination, can be further divided into four topical units. The first is made up of clauses (c) and (d); the second, (e) and (f); the third, (g) and (h); and the fourth, clause (i). The first is about the

author's present (changed) state of being able to relax a bit, after a busy conference schedule. The second unit focuses on the new mailing list: the addressee's name having been added to it and its transfer to the next chairman. The third unit talks about the postponement of the next conference and its effect on the members in general. The fourth unit, with the explicit topic-shifting marker zhìyú 'as for' in the initial position, concerns mainly the author's undecided status whether he will attend the next conference or not.

As the percentage figures indicate, at the end of the first topical unit, i.e. after chuǎnkōuqī 'relax' in clause (d), a considerable number of respondents (.69/.15) used le. This confirms our observation that le serves as a boundary marker between topical units. However, there are several facts regarding sample (3.44) that need to be further investigated. First of all, at the end of the second topical unit (i.e. clause (f)), the author did not use le and only an extremely low percentage of respondents (.08/.00) inserted it there. Secondly, while the unanimous omission of le after jiǔyuèzhōng 'mid-September' in clause (g), a non-discourse-final clause, is understandable (note also the presence of the connective wèicǐ 'therefore' in clause (h)), the comparatively low percentage of le (.46/.12) after cānjiā 'attend' in clause (h), the end of the third topical unit, seems puzzling, specifically in view

of the author's use of le in that position. Finally, neither the author nor the majority of the respondents (i.e. only (.27/.15)) inserted le at the end of clause (i). In what follows, these facts are examined in greater detail.

Let us begin with clause (i), which is a topical unit by itself. As mentioned earlier, sample (3.44) is the beginning portion of a correspondence between two friends. Consequently, we are not certain whether or not there is another clause following (i). Suppose (j) below is such a clause, then the non-use of le in (i) can be accounted for, since clauses (i) and (j) constitute a topical unit.

- (3.44) j. rúguǒ bù néng wǒ jiù wúfǎ cānjiā le.
if not can I then can't attend le

'If (the school) cannot (subsidize), then I won't be able to attend.'

If, on the other hand, there is no clause following (i), then le can be added at the end of clause (i), resulting in (i'):

- (3.44) i'. zhìyú wǒ shì fǒ cānjiā, děi kàn xuéxiào
néng fǒ bùzhǔ érdìng le.

In fact, (3.44i') is preferred by six of the twenty-six participants in the survey. However, the fact that the majority of the participants considered le either unnecessary or optional even when nothing follows it suggests that there are other factors concerning the author's non-use of it in clause (3.44i).

Clause (3.44i) contains such expressions as shì fǒ 'be or not,' néng fǒ 'can or not,' and (děi kàn) . . . érdìng

'(must) depend on . . .,' which are found typically in writings of classical style. These expressions are replaceable, respectively, by shì bú shì, néng bù néng, and jiù yào kàn . . . in contemporary colloquial Chinese:

(3.44) i". (zhìyú) wǒ shì bú shì cānjiā, jiù yào kàn
 xuéxiào néng bù néng bǔzhù le.

In (3.44i"), le is now needed to complete the topical unit. This suggests that style plays an important role with respect to the use of le. Since le did not come into vogue until modern times, one can expect that in writings with some classical flavor, most native speakers would hesitate to use it, even in discourse final positions.¹⁹

Let us now examine clause (3.44h), where le was used by the author but only a relatively low percentage of respondents considered its use obligatory. This clause, like (3.44i), also contains expressions with some classical flavor: wèicǐ 'therefore,' ze 'as a consequence,' and wú fǎ 'cannot.' These expressions can be replaced by zhèmeyìlái, jiù and méiyǒu bànfǎ, respectively, in the contemporary colloquial style. A colloquial form corresponding to (3.44h) is thus (3.44h') below:

(3.44) h". zhèmeyìlái, kǒngpà jiù yǒu hěnduō rén
 méiyǒu bànfǎ cānjiā ____.

As reported in Chang (1982:37-38), in a follow-up study in which clause (3.44h) was replaced by (3.44h'), still within the same context of sample (3.44), all the five respondents who did not use le in (3.44h) in the first

survey now considered it obligatory after cānjiā 'attend.' This shift in judgment on the use of le, therefore, constitutes strong evidence for the hypothesis that style plays a significant role in the use of le in Chinese discourse. However, the variation between the author's and the respondents' use of le in (3.44h) also suggests that native speakers do not agree unanimously on what is and what is not of classical style. This is further seen in clause (3.44i) discussed above, where some respondents (.27/.15) inserted le after érdìng 'decide,' although, as pointed out, this clause contains expressions of classical flavor such as zhìyú 'as to,' shì fǒ 'be or not,' néng fǒ 'can or not,' and (děi kàn) . . . érdìng '(must) depend on . . .'

The above discussion shows that le tends to be avoided in cases where expressions of classical flavor are involved. Furthermore, it also suggests that each individual seems to have slightly different perceptions with respect to what expressions tend to be classified as "classical."

We pointed out that clauses (3.44e) and (3.44f) together make up a topical unit. The end of clause (3.44f) is thus a potential position for the use of the sentence-final le. However, the author did not use le and only an extremely small number of respondents (.08/.00) inserted it there. In this clause, we also find such expressions as dāng 'thereupon,' jiāng 'take,' and shàng yǒu 'further include.' At first glance, it seems that style again plays

a decisive role here. However, even if we change (3.44f) to (3.44f'), its colloquial counterpart:

- (3.44) f'. wǒ huì bǎ nèi-ge xīn míng-dān (bāoguā
 I will take that-M new name-list (include
 zēngjiā hàn bǔchōng de) yíjiāo gěi xià-
 add and mend DE transfer to next-
 jiē zhǔbàn de rén.²⁰
 M responsible DE man

le is still inappropriate. The reason is that adding le forces the clause to have a "change of state" reading. That is, with the addition of le, (3.44f') would imply that the author originally did not want to transfer the name list but now somehow agrees to.

We are now faced with a situation in which the discourse function requires le to occur but the semantic function forbids it. Cases like this are not difficult to find. For example, observe sample (3.45) below, a conversational exchange:

- (3.45) A: nǐ shì nǎiguó rén?
 you be which-country man

'What's your nationality?'

- B: wǒ shì Zhōngguó rén.
 I be China man

'I'm Chinese.'

Adding le at the end of Speaker B's answer in (3.45) would result in the strange reading: I'm Chinese now. This shows that le will not be used discourse-finally when the speaker is asserting a factual statement where the "change of state" meaning is undesirable.

Sample (3.46) below is from the written data we examined:

- (3.46) Wǒmen fùnnǚ mòmò-liáng-jiǔ--
 we father-daughter silent-long-time
 zài fùyù-ānlè de shēnghuó-zhōng, wǒmen
 at wealthy-happy DE life-LOC we
 yǒngyuǎn sīniàn Gūmā de yíqiè . . .
 always remember aunt DE everything

(Gūmā Yú Wǒ)

'My father and I remained silent for a long period of time--in the wealthy and happy life we are enjoying, we always remember everything Aunt did (for us).'

This sample is the concluding portion of a short story, yet the use of le after yíqiè 'everything' is inappropriate. The reason is that the addition of le would force a "change of state" reading, i.e. previously the author and her family did not appreciate the sacrifices her aunt had made for them but (starting from) now they will remember the things she did for them. This use of le is thus incompatible not only with the adverbial yǒngyuǎn 'always,' an explicit marker of habitual facts but also with the entire story, which recounts the sacrifices the author's aunt had made for her and her family.

Before proceeding to the next section, there is one more fact regarding the use of le in discourse that is worth reporting here. Examine, for instance, the sample below:

- (3.47) a. Hòulái, zhèi-zuò kōngwū céngjīng
 later-on this-M empty-house previously
 chuánchū kūshēng yíshì, zhēnde
 disseminate cry-sound one-matter really
 biànchéng-le chuánshuō le,
 become-le legend

- b. biàncéng-le gùshì Ø . . .
become-le story

(Kū Wū)

'Later on, the fact that there had been cries coming out from this empty house really became a legend, a story . . .'

Sample (3.47) appeared at the end of a short story we examined. The positions marked by Ø are the potential positions for le to occur. The non-use of le after chuánshuō 'legend' in clause (a), a clause involving a "change of state" reading, is understandable, since it is non-discourse-final and is followed by a syntactically parallel and semantically synonymous clause: biàncéng-le gùshì '(has) become a story.' However, the non-use of le at the end of clause (b) is quite puzzling. First of all, clause (b), like (a), involves a "change of state" reading, i.e. it has become a story that there had been cries coming from the house. Furthermore, the clause occurs at the end of the story, so le, as a discourse-final particle, is needed to wrap up the whole story. However, in spite of the fact that the sentence-final le is needed here on both semantic and discourse grounds, the author chose not to use it. The reason is that in doing so, the author deliberately creates a feeling of suspense, leaving the audience "hanging in mid air," much like the endings of Hitchcock movies.

3.4.4 The Sentence-Final Le in Discourse: A Summary

The use of the sentence-final le in Chinese narrative discourse can be summarized as follows:

(A) Le functions as a discourse-final particle in Mandarin Chinese. This can be seen from the author's use of le at the discourse-final positions of the samples discussed. The fact that le is in general withheld until the end of a discourse block is reached, as shown in samples (3.37) and (3.38), lends further support to this observation.

(B) A discourse unit is in essence a relative term. Since there is no absolute agreement on what constitutes a discourse unit, we can well expect variations in the use of le in discourse. This fact is reflected in the samples we examined, specifically in sample (3.39), where the author used le only once, apparently treating the passage as an indivisible whole within a larger context. Without such a context as a guide, the respondents, however, could subdivide the same passage in the ways they felt appropriate and, therefore, more le's were used. Variations of this type, however, do not invalidate our basic hypothesis of le as a discourse-final particle. The respondents' insertion of le at the end of clauses (3.39b) and (3.39f), which represent potential discourse breaks, in fact strengthens our hypothesis. The variations in effect result from the different applications of a common set of principles which

govern the use of this particle. Consequently, given the same passage, native speakers of Chinese may vary in their use of le, depending on their organization of the discourse, their perception of the relatedness of events, and their world knowledge.

(C) Since a discourse unit is relative, le can sometimes be used as a marker between sub-topical units, as sample (3.44) shows. In general, the more closely related the information units are under the same topic, the less likely is the use of le between them. This explains why the use of le is rendered unnecessary by the presence of connectives serving as discourse-internal ties, such as nà 'that, in that case' in sample (3.42) and yīnér 'as a consequence' in sample (3.43). The unanimous omission of le after zōng-héng-qiǎn-lǐ 'proceed freely and smoothly' in sample (3.42) can be accounted for on the same grounds, since it is followed directly by wú-wǎng-bú-lì 'succeed without difficulty,' an expression which is syntactically and semantically parallel. This fact that le is not used between closely knit coordinate structure is further supported by the omission of le after chuánshuō 'legend' in clause (3.47a).

(D) Style plays an important role in the use of le in discourse. Specifically, le is not used in cases where expressions of classical flavor are included. For instance, in sample (3.44), the author did not use le after érdìng

'decide' in clause (i), and only a small number of respondents (27%) considered its use obligatory, since in addition to érdìng, the clause also includes such classical expressions as zhìyú 'as to,' shì fǒ 'be or not.' and néng fǒ 'can or not.' However, there seems to be no clear-cut dividing line between what is and what is not of classical style, as sample (3.44) illustrates.

(E) In general, le is not used in cases where factual statements are asserted, specifically when its presence would result in an undesirable "change of state" reading. Samples (3.45) and (3.46), as well as clause (f) in sample (3.44) all point to this fact. Another case where le is not used is when the speaker/writer is expressing an expectation about a future event. This is supported by the unanimous omission of le in clause (d) and the relatively low percentage (.08/.12) in clause (g) of sample (3.39). Furthermore, the use of le may be withheld for rhetorical reasons, e.g. to create a deliberate feeling of suspense, as the sample in (3.47) illustrates.

3.5 Notes

1. The sources are given in parentheses at the end of each sample. CDN is the abbreviated form for the Central Daily News (overseas edition).
2. The discussion of the verbal suffix -le in this section is based essentially on Chu and Chang (1985).
3. This instance of -le occurs as an integral part of the set phrase wèi-le 'for the sake of.' Another example is chǔ-le 'with the exception of.'
4. These classical-flavored expressions are from the same sample, i.e. Gūmā Yú Wǒ 'My Aunt and I.'
5. The samples in (3.15) and (3.16) are excerpted from Tai (1985:51).
6. The omissions of -le here may also have to do with the fixed expression piāo-yáng-guò-hǎi 'crossing the seas and oceans.' See further discussion of sample (4.13) in Section 4.2.
7. See also Davis and Huang (1986), who state that "it is judiciousness in the use of -le that permits a sequence of statements to blend without boundaries so that the subsequent use of -le toward the end of the narrative will effectively mark, thereby, a more prominent boundary, and produce the effect of 'peak'."
8. Longacre and Levinsohn (1977:108) also hold that lexical items such as synonyms, repetitions of predicates, the addition of further accompanying NPs, and vocabulary items related in a hierarchy from generic to specific, give cohesion to discourse.
9. The important role repetition plays in spoken discourse is also observed by Hinds (1979:138-139), who states that "there is a general tendency in Japanese conversation to repeat the words, phrases, or grammatical patterns of the other participant in an attempt to achieve solidarity."
10. This sample is excerpted from Halliday (1985:310).
11. See also Lu (1977:276-284) and Tai (1985:52).

12. As pointed out in Bickerton (1975:7), realis mode (or "real time") is normally used in referring to factual situations, whereas irrealis mode (or "unreal time") is normally used to refer to counter-factual or non-factual situations. Givon (1984:285) also notes that tenses such as the past and the present are "clearly realis ("fact") terms, dealing with events/states that either have occurred or are in the process of occurring."
13. The incompatibility of -le with verbs followed by a resultative complement headed by de is also observed by Lu (1977:288-290). To account for the mutual exclusiveness of the two, he proposes that -le and de (which he refers to as the "potential marker") be derived by a rewrite rule in the categorial component like:

AUX-->{^{POT}
 ^{ASP}}
14. The perfective suffix -le (了) in modern Mandarin has generally been associated with its homograph liǎo, a verb meaning 'to complete, to finish,' which is now rarely used except in set phrases like liǎo-le yíjiàn shì 'finished up a matter' or in the so-called resultative constructions such as chī-de-liǎo 'able to eat (to finish)' and zuò-bù-liǎo 'unable to do/perform.' Zhou (1961:274) notes that the two are historically and phonetically related. Chao (1968:246) holds that -le is a weakened form of liǎo but does not elaborate on how liǎo, as a full verb, developed into the perfective suffix -le. Wang (1958:308) points out that liǎo first appeared as a verb suffix in the Southern Tang Dynasty (ca. A.D. 923-936). An earlier emergence of liǎo used as a perfective suffix is suggested by Cheung (1977). After studying the so-called Biānwén, a collection of religious sermons and folk stories dating from the eighth to the tenth centuries, Cheung proposes that during the span of these three centuries, liǎo gradually developed into the suffix -le, perhaps due to the extensive translations from Sanskrit. Mei (1981:65) holds that it is perhaps in mid tenth century that liǎo began to emerge as a true perfective marker and subsequently weakened phonetically to become -le.
15. The discussion of the sentence-final le in this section (specifically, sub-sections 3.4.3 and 3.4.4) draws a great deal from Chang (1982).

16. See also Li (1985:147), who states that "in organizing smaller units to form larger ones in discourse, there is no fixed way, or 'the correct' pattern of organization . . . there may be several different 'correct' organizational patterns for the same set of units." She further notes that the same speaker may also have different judgments about the organization of the same material in different environments or at different times.
17. Longacre and Levinsohn (1977:108) also treat conjunctives as one of the surface structure devices which give cohesion in discourse.
18. I am grateful to Professor Chu for providing me with this sample.
19. Chao (1968:246) holds that the sentence-final le is "probably a weak form of the verb lái 'come.'" He cites two pieces of evidence for this etymology. First of all, in the Ningpo dialect, the verb 'come' and the sentence-final le are pronounced the same. Secondly, in certain old texts, lái (來) occurs where a modern le would be expected, as in the sample below, excerpted from Jīndé Chuándēng Lù 'Records of the Transmission of the Lamp,' compiled during the Jinde Era (1004-1007):
 Bǎizhāng yīrì wèn Shī: "Shénmo chù qù lái?"
 Baizhang one-day ask Master what place go lái
 (Shī) yú: "Dàxióng Shān xià cái jūnzi
 (Master) say Daxiong Mt. below pick mushroom
lái."
lái
 'One day, (disciple) Baizhang asked Master (monk Xiyun): "Where go lái?" The Master replied: "To the foot of Daxiong Mountain to pick mushroom lái."
 Furthermore, in our examination of Wang's (1944) Readings in Traditional Chinese, an anthology containing 220 essays, stories and poems, dating from the fifth century B.C. to the twelfth century A.D., no single occurrence of le is found.
20. It is worth noting that the use of huì 'will' indicating a future event is also significant here.

CHAPTER IV THE SURVEY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

In Chapter I, we pointed out that the particle LE in Mandarin has been a constant source of confusion not only for students of Chinese but also for grammarians and linguists working on the language. In Chapter II, we saw that most of the previous studies of the particle are confined to the traditional sentential analysis and fail to provide an adequate description of LE in discourse. Furthermore, for those which do go beyond the sentence level to examine its occurrences in discourse, we pointed out that their explanations are not entirely satisfactory, specifically with respect to its functions in Chinese narrative discourse. After examining a substantial number of discourse samples in Chapter III, we presented our hypotheses regarding the discourse functions LE serves in a Chinese narrative. To check on the hypotheses, we conducted a survey on the contemporary use of LE among eighty native speakers of Chinese. In this chapter, we will first report the results of the survey and then discuss its implications.

4.1 The Survey

In order to determine native speakers' impressions regarding the use of LE in a narrative discourse, we conducted a survey of the particle among eighty native speakers of Chinese.¹ The survey consists of eight test samples, each of which can be treated as a discourse unit in its own right. With the exception of sample (8),² which is adopted from Spanos (1979), all of the samples are excerpts from stories in Chinese novels and newspapers.

In the survey, we removed all occurrences of LE from the original texts but instead provided blanks indicating the positions where it is structurally possible for LE to occur. The survey was submitted to eighty native speakers of Chinese, who were asked to first read each sample carefully and then indicate, by writing LE in the position, where they felt it was necessary in the text. In the cases where LE is optional, they were instructed to write it in parentheses. At the end of the survey, they were requested to read through each passage once more and make adjustments wherever necessary.

4.2 Interpretation of the Test Samples

In reporting the results of the survey, we present each test sample with blanks filled by percentage figures, indicating the number of respondents who inserted LE in that position. In cases where the author used LE, it is

represented by spelling it out. The first figure in each blank shows the obligatory use of LE by the respondents and the second, the optional use. In this chapter, we will examine in detail five of the eight test items included in the survey. The other three items are presented in the appendix, although portions of these items will be cited as supporting evidence in our discussion of the usage of LE in narrative discourse.

Let us begin with the first test item, excerpted from Zheng Zhi's novel Jīzhàn Wú-míng Chuān 'A Fierce Battle at the Wu-ming River':

- (4.1) a. Yìpáng, zǎo yǒu yíge zhànshì, juǎnqǐ
one-side early have one-M soldier roll-up
.41/.16 xiúzi
sleeves
- b. cóng lǎo bānzhǎng shēnpáng shíqǐ
from old squad-commander body-side pick-up
.16/.13 shǒujù,
hand-saw
- c. bìzhù .14/.15 yìkǒu dàqì,
close-up one-M big-breath
- d. xiàng lǎo bānzhǎng nèiyàng,
as old squad-commander that-manner
shùnzhè .00/.00 huǒlù, sōu-sōu-sōu yòu
along fire-path whizz-whizz again
pānshàng-le .64/.14 lièhuǒ fēiténg
climb-up fierce-fire fly-gallop
de mùpáijià
DE wood-scaffold
- e. búyìhuǒ nèi zhànshì xiàng qiáoxià
in-no-time that soldier toward bridge-LOC
dà hǎn .00/.00: "Pǎokāi!"
loud yell run-away
- f. jiēzhe dèngchū .38/.08 yòujiǎo,
subsequently kick-out right-foot

- g. jiù tīng .09/.03 "kēbā" yìshēng,
then hear thump one-sound
- h. nèigēn huǒhóng de lìzhù, tuōzhe .03/.00
that-M burning-red DE column drag-ZHE
huǒ shé, yītóu zāi-le .94/.05 xiàlái.
fire tongue one-head fall down

'On one side, there was already a soldier who rolled up his sleeves and picked up the hand-saw from beside the old sergeant. The soldier took a deep breath, and (moving) along the fire lane, as the old sergeant did, he climbed, with the sounds "whizz-whizz," up the wooden scaffold, which was engulfed in a raging flame. In no time, the soldier shouted (in warning) to (people) underneath the bridge: "Stay back!" Subsequently, (he) kicked out with his right foot. Then there was (heard) a "thump" and the flaming-red column, dragging along the licking flame, fell headlong to the ground.'

Sample (4.1) is part of an episode in which a platoon of soldiers were called on to put out a fire which was engulfing a wooden bridge. The sample was chosen as a test item because it narrates a series of events occurring in succession where the suffix -le could potentially be used. In Sections 3.2.1 and 3.3.1 of Chapter III, we observed that in a sequence of events, the suffix tends to occur with the last action/event verb which marks the culminating event. Therefore, we are interested in finding out whether the respondents' use of -le in this sample would support this observation.

In sample (4.1), there are many potential positions for the suffix -le to occur, as the blanks in the passage indicate. The author, however, used it only twice: after

pānshàng 'climb up' in clause (d) and after zāi 'fall' in clause (h). As the percentage figures show, the majority of the respondents agreed with the author's use: (.64/.14) after pānshàng 'climb up' and (.94/.05) after zāi 'fall.' Upon close examination, these two positions are indeed the most appropriate slots for -le to occur. The passage can in fact be broken up into two discourse segments, each maintaining a uniform orientation. The first segment consists of clauses (a)-(d) and narrates the following events occurring one after another: the soldier's rolling up his sleeves, picking up the hand-saw, taking a deep breath and climbing up the burning wooden scaffold, with the last one as the culmination. The second segment, which is composed of clauses (e)-(h), recounts another series of events: the soldier's calling out to (the people) underneath the bridge, his kicking out (the burning column) with his right foot, (people's) hearing a "thump" and finally the falling of the burning-red column to the ground. Again the last event serves as the "peak" in this sequence of events in the second discourse segment. It is worth noting here that our division of sample (4.1) into two discourse segments is further supported by the presence of the temporal adverbial búyíhuěr 'in no time' at the beginning of clause (e). As Longacre and Levinsohn (1977: 118) point out, a change of location or temporal discontinuity usually corresponds with a break between discourse units. This

adverbial phrase thus serves as an explicit marker, delineating the temporal boundary between the two discourse segments.³

The fact that both the author and the majority of the respondents used -le after pānshàng in clause (d) and zāi in clause (h) thus strongly supports our observation of the suffix as a marker of the peak event in a discourse segment. This provides a natural explanation for the low percentage use of -le in other positions in the passage: it was not used because those positions do not represent the most salient event(s) in the context of sample (4.1).

There are several other facts revealed in sample (4.1) with respect to the use of the suffix -le which are worth noting here. First of all, the unanimous omission of -le after hǎn 'yell, call out' in clause (e) confirms our observation that in general the suffix does not occur with verbs of saying when they are followed by a direct quote. Secondly, the extremely low percentage (.03/.00) of -le after tuōzhe 'drag-ZHE' in clause (h) shows that the suffix is incompatible with the aspect marker -zhe. The suffix -zhe is analyzed in Su (1973:45) as the marker of the "concomitative" aspect, the function of which is to indicate an action or event "existing or occurring concurrently with or accompanying what is denoted by the main verb in the sentence." For example, in (4.2) below, the action represented by the verb phrase zǒuzhe lù 'walking' happens

at the same time as the action represented by the main verb kàn bào 'reading newspapers':

- (4.2) Bié zǒu-zhe lù kàn bào.
don't walk-ZHE road read newspaper

'Don't read the newspaper while you're walking.'

More importantly, in (4.2) the main idea is kàn bào 'reading the newspaper' and the action of walking (i.e. zǒu-zhe lù) is only secondary in importance. As Chu (1983:92) points out, the sentence in (4.2) can be recast as (4.2'), with a . . . de shíhòu-subordinate clause replacing the V-zhe phrase:

- (4.2') Zǒu lù de shíhòu bié kàn bào.
walk road when don't read newspaper

'Don't read the newspaper while you're walking.'

Therefore, the verb with the -zhe suffix denotes an action or event happening at the same time as, but is subordinate to, what the main verb of the sentence represents.⁴ In terms of discourse, then, an action/event verb with -zhe suffixed to it does not fall on the main event line of a narrative but rather serves as a piece of background information, concurrent with and amplifying on the main events. This explains why the suffix does not co-occur with -le, the latter being, as we have seen, an explicit morphosyntactic signal for the peak event in a discourse segment.

The unanimous omission of -le after shùn-zhe '(moving) along' in clause (d) can be explained in the same manner,

although we suspect that the phrase has lost its verbal properties and behaves more like a prepositional phrase, as in (4.3):

- (4.3) Nǐ shùn-zhe zhèitiáo lù zǒu, jiù dào le.
 you along this-M road walk then arrive le
 'You walk along this road, (and) then (you'll) get there.'

The temporal phrase jiē-zhe at the beginning of clause (f), which originally was a composite of the verb jiē 'receive' and the suffix -zhe but now is used idiomatically to mean 'subsequently,' further supports our observation.

The low percentage (.09/.03) use of -le after tīng 'hear' in clause (g) can be similarly accounted for. As Professor Chu (personal communication) pointed out, the clause in fact represents a subsidiary event (i.e. then there was (heard) a "thump"),⁵ providing a description of a consequence of the main event in clause (h), about the falling of the column to the ground. Background events, as we saw earlier, do not occur with the suffix -le.

In our review of Andreasen (1981),⁶ we saw that, closely following Li and Thompson (1981), he claims that the suffix -le is rendered unnecessary in the presence of the so-called "perfectivizing verbal complements." Such verbal complements include, among other things, the "verbal particles" (e.g. qǐ 'up' and shàng 'on, up'), the "directional complements" (e.g. dào 'to' and chū 'out') and the "resultative complements" (e.g. wán 'finish' and zháo

'accomplish'). The respondents' insertion of -le in sample (4.1), however, shows that his claim is not entirely correct. The verbal particle qǐ 'up' occurs in clauses (a) and (b) with the verbs juǎn 'roll' and shí 'pick,' respectively. In the case of juǎnqi 'roll up,' quite a number of respondents (.41/.16) inserted -le. After shíqi 'pick up,' we find that 29% (.16/.13) of the respondents also inserted the suffix. Another verbal particle shàng 'up' is used with the verb pān 'climb' in clause (d), but the majority of the respondents (.64/.14) inserted -le after the particle. With respect to dèngchū 'kick out' in clause (f) and bìzhù 'close up' in clause (c)--the former containing, in Andreasen's terms, the directional complement chū 'out' and the latter, the resultative complement zhù 'up,' we find that a certain percentage of the respondents nevertheless inserted -le: (.38/.08) and (.14/.15), respectively. The respondents' use of -le in the above clauses, all of which contain what Andreasen calls "perfectivizing verbal complements," thus shows that his claim is too strong. In particular, Andreasen would not be able to account for the high percentage use of the suffix after pānshàng in clause (d). This is because he fails to recognize the fact that the suffix -le serves as an explicit marker for the peak event in a segment of discourse. In fact, treating -le as an overt morphosyntactic signal for a peak event provides a natural explanation as to why a great

number of the respondents inserted it after pānshàng 'climb up' in (d) than in other clauses which also involve the same construction, i.e. verb + "perfectivizing verbal complement."

The fact that quite a number of respondents (41%) considered -le obligatory after juǎnqǐ 'roll up' in clause (a) seems puzzling. It is possible that the subjects who inserted it in this position were using it to indicate that the soldier's rolling up his sleeves is the first in a sequence of events that follow, i.e. as an explicit marker of anteriority. However, for the majority of the respondents (59%), -le in this position is either unnecessary or optional. This suggests that individual differences exist among native speakers regarding the use of -le, specifically in non-peak clauses of a discourse segment.

Next, let us examine the second test sample, rendered below as (4.4):

- (4.4) a. Huá Lǎoshuān hūrán zuòqǐ .24/.15 shēn
Hua Laoshuan suddenly sit-up body
- b. cā-zhe huǒchái
strike-ZHE match
- c. diǎnshàng .15/.15 biànshēn yóulà de
light-on whole-body greasy DE
dēngzhǎn
oil-lamp
- d. cháguǎn de liǎng-jīān wūzi-lǐ biàn
tea-house DE two-M room-LOC then
mǐmǎn-le .73/.09 qīngbái de guāng
fill-with green-white DE light

- e. "Xiǎoshuān de diē, nǐ jiù qù ma?"
Xiaoshuan DE father you then go INTERROG
- f. shì yíge lǎo nǚrén de shēngyīn
be one-M old woman DE voice
- g. lǐbiān de wūzi-lǐ yě fāchū .34/.18 yízhèn
inside DE room-LOC also issue-out one-M
ké'sòu
cough
- h. "Mm."
Mm
- i. Lǎoshuān yímiàn tīng yímiàn yīng
Laoshuan at-once listen at-once answer
yímiàn kòushàng .14/.26 yīfū
at-once button-up clothes
- j. shēn shǒu .06/.09 guòqu
stretch hand across
- k. shuō .00/.01 : "Nǐ gěi wǒ ba."
say you give I PART
- l. Huá Dàma zài zhěntou dǐxià, tāo-le
Hua Dama at pillow underneath grope
1.00/.00 bàn-tiān
half-day
- m. tāochū .20/.15 yíbāo yángqián
pull-out one-M silver-dollar
- n. jiāogěi .10/.19 Lǎoshuān
give-to Laoshuan
- o. Lǎoshuān jiē-le .98/.00
Laoshuan receive
- p. dǒudǒude zhuāngrù .08/.10 yīdài
tremblingly put-into pocket
- q. yòu zài wàimiàn àn-le .79/.11 liǎngxià
then at outside press two-times
- r. biàn diǎnshàng .10/.16 dēnglóng
then light-on paper-lantern
- s. chuīxí .23/.29 dēngzhǎn
blow-out oil-lamp

- t. zǒu xiàng wūzi-lǐ qù LE .79/.06.
walk toward room-LOC go

'Hua Laoshuan suddenly sat up, (and) striking a match, lit the completely grease-covered oil lamp. The two rooms of the teahouse were then filled with a greenish-white light. "Are you going (now), Xiaoshuan's father?" It was an old woman's voice. The room inside also issued forth a cough. "Mm." Laoshuan, listening, answering, and buttoning up (his) clothing at the same time, stretched out (his) hand and said: "You'd better give (the money) to me." Hua Dama fumbled under the pillow for a long time (for the money), pulled out a packet of silver dollars, and gave (it) to Laoshuan. Laoshuan took (it) and nervously put (it) into (his) pocket and then pressed the outside (of the pocket) twice. Then (he) lit a paper lantern, blew out the oil lamp and walked toward the room inside.'

This sample is excerpted from Lu Xun's short story Yào 'Medicine.' The first four clauses were discussed in our review of Andreasen (1981) in Chapter II. These clauses make up a discourse segment, narrating a series of events which begin with Hua Laoshuan's (suddenly) sitting up, followed by his striking a match, lighting the oil lamp and end with the two room's being filled with a greenish-white light. Clause (b), with the concomitative aspect marker -zhe, represents a piece of background information concurrent with the action denoted by diǎnshàng 'light up' in clause (c). The use of -le is thus ruled out in (b). Among the three kinetic events expressed by clauses (a), (c), and (d), the author used -le only with the verb míman 'fill with' in clause (d). As the percentage figures indicate, the majority of the respondents (.73/.09) also

inserted -le in this position. Andreasen's explanation, as we recall, is that the presence of the "highly" quantified object, qīngbái de guāng 'greenish-white light' in (d) conditions the use of -le in this clause. However, the fact that both the author and the majority of the subjects in our survey withheld the use of -le in clause (c), which contains an equally (if not more) "highly" quantified object biànshēn yóulà de dēngzhǎn 'oil lamp completely covered with grease,' shows that his explanation is not at all convincing. In fact, the use of -le in clause (d), the culminating clause of the segment consisting of clauses (a)-(d), is better accounted for, if the suffix is analyzed as a marker for the peak event in a discourse segment. This also provides a natural explanation for the low percentage of -le in (a) and (c), both being non-peak clauses. The percentage figures in these two clauses again show that variations exist regarding the use of -le in non-peak clauses of a discourse segment.

Clause (e) is a quoted speech of another character (i.e. Hua Dama), and this is followed by (f), which gives an explanation, by way of a description of the voice, about who spoke. In clause (g), it is structurally possible to insert -le after fāchū 'issue out,' specifically in view of the presence of yízhèn késòu 'a series of coughs,' a noun phrase referred to as "quantified object" by Li and Thompson (1981). However, as the percentage figures indicate, only 34% of the respondents regarded -le as obligatory in this

position. Clause (g) seems to be a piece of injected information and therefore does not qualify as a kinetic event in a discourse segment. The uncertainty about the role clause (g) plays in the context of sample (4.4) is indicated by the percentage figures: only 34% of the respondents considered -le obligatory. This again shows that in non-peak clauses of a discourse segment, native speakers' judgments about whether or not to use -le admit certain degree of latitude.

Clauses (h)-(k) seem to make up a discourse segment since they narrate a series of events pertaining to the protagonist, Hua Laoshuan. Clause (h), which contains solely the attention signal "Mm" (Leech and Svartrik, 1975: 114), is the response to the question in clause (e). This is followed by clause (i), where three sub-events tīng 'listen,' yīng 'answer,' and kòushàng yīfū 'button up clothes' are conjoined by the connector yímiàn, a marker of simultaneity⁷ and functions very much like the concomitative aspect marker -zhe mentioned above. In clause (j), the event of Hua Laoshuan's stretching out his hand (to his wife) is described, and it is followed by (k), which contains the verb shuō 'say' and a direct quote about what is said. The low percentage of -le after kòushàng 'button up' in clause (i) and after shēn shǒu 'extend hand' in clause (j) is readily accounted for, since these two clauses represent non-peak events. The fact that -le was almost

unanimously omitted after shuō 'say' in clause (k), the culmination of the discourse segment composed of clauses (h)-(k), is understandable since, as pointed out in Chapter III, the peak is in fact the direct quote following the verb shuō 'say,' rather than the verb itself.

The next segment of discourse in sample (4.4) seems to consist of clauses (l)-(n), since they all pertain to the actions performed by Hua Dama, the protagonist's wife: her groping underneath the pillow (for a long time), her pulling out a packet of silver dollars and her giving it to her husband. While the low percentage (.20/.15) of -le after tāochū 'pull out' in clause (m), a non-peak clause, is readily accounted for, the unanimous insertion of the suffix after the verb tāo 'grobe' in clause (l) and the low percentage (.10/.19) after jiāogěi 'give to' in clause (n) need further examination.

Let us examine clause (l) first, which represents the first of the sequence of events about Hua Dama. The percentage figures show that all of the respondents, like the author himself, unanimously inserted -le after the main verb tāo 'grobe.' This unanimous use of the suffix in non-peak clauses seems puzzling, at first glance. However, it in fact confirms our observation in Chapter III that a monosyllabic action/event verb in Mandarin tends to co-occur with the suffix -le, as a realis marker, to recount what (has) happened, regardless of whether the verb occurs in a

peak clause or not. The high percentage ((.98/.00) and (.79/.11), respectively) of -le after jiē 'receive' in clause (o) and after àn 'press' in (q) can be explained in the same manner. Moreover, the near unanimous insertion (.94/.05) of the suffix after zāi 'fall' in clause (h) of sample (4.1), discussed above, further supports our observation, although as we pointed out earlier, this clause also represents a culminating event in the context of sample (4.1).⁸

Next, let us examine clause (n), which is the last clause of the discourse segment about Hua Dama. This clause, it seems, represents the culminating event of the three-clause discourse segment. However, the author did not use the suffix -le after jiāogěi 'give to' in this clause. Furthermore, the percentage figures show that only 10% of the respondents regarded it obligatory in this position. This is very perplexing, specifically in view of our observation that the suffix serves as a marker of the peak event in a discourse segment.

One possible explanation for this low percentage use of -le is that it is rendered unnecessary by the presence in clause (o) of the verb jiē 'receive,' which bears a strong collocational bond with jiāogěi 'give to' in Chinese narrative discourse. This then confirms our observation that in cases where the verbs exhibit lexical cohesion (in this case, collocation), the potential -le's are in general

withheld. This explanation, however, is not entirely convincing. In fact, it suggests that clauses (1)-(n), though all pertaining to Hua Dama, perhaps should be more appropriately treated as part of the larger discourse segment consisting of clauses (1)-(q). This segment centers around the theme yángqián 'silver dollars,' i.e. Hua Dama first groped for a long time underneath the pillow (for the money), pulled out a packet of silver dollars, and gave it to her husband. After he received it, he nervously put it into his pocket, and pressed twice the outside of the pocket (to make sure the money was properly placed).

The theme yángqián 'silver dollars' in fact is first implicitly brought up in clause (k), but is left out both in clause (k) and in clause (1), presumably due to the tacit understanding between Laoshuan and his wife, Hua Dama. This is shown below, where $\emptyset$ represents the use of zero anaphor:

- (4.4) k. (Lǎoshuān) shuō .00/.01 : "Nǐ gěi wǒ $\emptyset_1$
 (Laoshuan) say you give I
 ba."
 PART
- l. Huá Dàma zài zhěntou dǐxià, (tāo $\emptyset_1$)
 Hua Dama at pillow underneath (groped)
 tāo-le 1.00/.00 bàn-tiān
 groped half-day
- m. tāochū .20/.15 yībāo yángqián₁
 pull-out one-M silver-dollar
- n. (bā⁹ $\emptyset_1$) jiāogěi .10/.19 Lǎoshuān
 (BA) give-to Laoshuan
- o. Lǎoshuān jiē-le .98/.00 $\emptyset_1$
 Laoshuan receive

- p. dǒudǒude (bǎ Ø₁) zhuāngrù .08/.10 yīdài₂
tremblingly (BA) put-into pocket
- q. yòu zài Ø₂ wàimiàn àn-le .79/.11 liǎngxià
then at outside press two-times

The first explicit mention of the theme is in clause (m), where it is introduced in the nominal form: (yìbāo) yángqián '(a packet of) silver dollars.' Here the reader realizes what it is that Hua Dama was groping for underneath the pillow. Subsequently, in clauses (n)-(p), the theme is mentioned only in zero form. In clause (q), the zero form, Ø₂, refers back to another nominal yīdài 'pocket,' introduced in clause (p). Clause (q) belongs to the same discourse segment as clause (p), since the purpose of Laoshuan's pressing the outside of the pocket twice is to make sure that the silver dollars are securely placed.

The significance of the author's use of zero anaphora in these clauses is to indicate that they are closely related, both semantically and discursively. As Li (1985) convincingly demonstrates, zero anaphora in Chinese narrative serves as an internal tie between clauses within a topic chain and occurs "in a clause whose meaning is so closely related to that of the preceding one(s) that they may be regarded as components of a series of related actions, events, or states" (p. 162). This thus provides a more natural explanation for the low percentage of -le after jìāogěi 'give to' (.10/.19) in clause (n) and after zhuāngrù 'put into' (.08/.10) in clause (p), since both are part of

but do not represent the peak event in the discourse segment. The peak event is in fact clause (q), where the author used -le after the verb àn 'press' and so did the majority of the respondents (.79/.11). Of course, the fact that the verb àn 'press' is monosyllabic may also have exerted some influence on the respondents' use of -le in this clause. In clause (o), which also represents a non-peak event, 98% of the respondents regarded the suffix as obligatory after jiē 'receive.' This high percentage is expected, since monosyllabic action verbs in Mandarin tend to occur with the realis marker -le to recount past happenings.

Our analysis of clauses (1)-(n), which all pertain to Hua Dama, as part of the discourse segment consisting of clauses (1)-(q), all centering around yángqián 'silver dollars,' in fact suggests that a discourse segment is very difficult to define. We recall that, according to Hinds (1979:140-141), a discourse segment is a unit of discourse which "contains an indeterminate number of sentences or clauses, all of which maintain a unified orientation." The question that immediately arises is: how do we justify that a sequence of sentences/clauses maintain a "unified orientation" and thus may constitute a discourse segment? With respect to sample (4.4), clauses (1)-(n) all concern the same participant: Hua Dama. In this sense, they maintain a "unified orientation" and thus may constitute a

discourse segment, much like the way clauses (h)-(k) are analyzed as forming a discourse segment, since the latter clauses focus on the same participant: Hua Laoshuan. However, in the context of sample (4.4), clauses (l)-(n) are more appropriately treated as belonging to a larger stretch of discourse about the packet of silver dollars, which, in Grimes' (1975:43) terms, is the "prop" in a narrative discourse. This, however, does not imply that "props" take precedence over "participants" in a narrative discourse. What it suggests is that Hinds' definition of a discourse segment as a constituent maintaining a unified orientation, though essentially a useful one, should be used with caution when segmenting a stretch of discourse into discrete units.

The remaining clauses in sample (4.4), i.e. clauses (r)-(t), together form the last discourse segment, narrating three events Hua Laoshuan performed after he made sure that the money had been securely placed in the pocket. That is, he lit a paper lantern, blew out the oil lamp, and then walked toward the room inside, with the last event as the culmination. As the percentage figures indicate, the respondents were quite parsimonious in their insertion of the suffix -le in clauses (r) and (s). This low percentage is in fact expected, since both clauses represent non-peak events. The LE in clause (t), the last clause of the passage, is in fact ambiguous in that it occurs at the end of the clause and is immediately preceded by the action verb

gù 'go.' The precise status of LE in this clause, however, does not make a significant difference, so far as the overall discourse structure of sample (4.4) is concerned. As the suffix -le, it marks the clause as the peak event of the last discourse segment in (4.4). On the other hand, as the sentence-final le, it functions as a discourse-final particle, wrapping up the entire passage in (4.4). The important point is that whatever its status is, the LE in clause (t) is necessary--the author used it there, as did the majority of the respondents.

Let us now examine the third test item, reproduced as (4.5) below:

- (4.5) a. Hēizǐ de niáng shāoshāo chénmò-le .88/.03
Heizi DE mother a-little silent
yìhuér,
a-while
- b. bǎ kuàngdēng dīgěi .24/.18 zhàngfū,
BA mine-lamp hand-to husband
- c. yòu zhǔfù shuō .03/.00 : "Míngtiān
then remindingly say tomorrow
lǐng bú lǐng miànfěn, dōu zǎo
receive not receive flour all early
diǎr huílái."
a-little return
- d. Shízhuàng jiē-le 1.00/.00 dēng
Shizhuang receive lamp
- e. mào zhe fēng xuě
brave-ZHE wind-snow
- f. dàbùdi zǒu LE .85/.01
in-great-stride walk
- g. Hēizǐ de niáng yìzhí kàn zhe zhàngfū
Heizi DE mother straight look-ZHE husband
xiāoshì-le .49/.04 bèiyǐng
disappear back-shadow

- h. cháng chōu-le .73/.10 yìkǒu qì
long draw-out one-M breath
- i. cái huídào .04/.10 wū-lǐ.
then return-to room-LOC

'Heizi's mother remained silent for a while. (Then) she handed the miner's lamp to her husband. Remindingly, she said: "Whether or not you get the flour tomorrow, (try to) get back earlier." Shizhuang took the lamp and walked away in a long stride against the wind and snow. Heizi's mother watched and watched until the sight of her husband's back disappeared (in the distance). She (then) took a deep breath and walked into the house.'

Sample (4.5) is excerpted from the novel: Kuàngshān Fēngyún 'The Story of the Miners' by Li Xueshi (1972:5). The original contains five instances of LE, four of which can be unambiguously identified as the suffix -le: after chénmò 'silent' in clause (a), after jiē 'receive' in (d), after xiāoshì 'disappear' in (g), and after chōu 'draw out' in (h). The remaining instance of LE occurs at the end of clause (f) and cannot be unambiguously identified as either the suffix -le or the sentence-final le.

This sample was selected primarily because it illustrates several interesting facts about the use of -le. First of all, the author used -le with the stative verb chénmò 'silent' in clause (a)--the first in a sequence of events. Stative verbs, as we recall, in general do not occur with the suffix -le, unless followed by the so-called "cognate objects." This traditional account, however, is not entirely convincing. We proposed in Chapter II that it

is in fact the use of -le with stative verbs that converts them into dynamic process/event verbs, thus allowing them to take "cognate objects." It would be interesting, then, to check to what extent the respondents would use -le with a stative verb followed by a cognate object occurring as the first event in a series of events. Furthermore, the stative verbs we examined in Chapter II such as dà 'big' and bīng 'ill' are monosyllabic in nature. Therefore, the respondents' use of -le after chénmò 'silent' would also reveal whether the bisyllabic nature of the verb affects their use of the suffix.

Secondly, clause (g) contains the verbal compound xiāoshì 'disappear,' which is interesting for the following reasons. To begin with, the compound is in essence a combination of xiāo 'to extinguish, to disappear' and shì 'to vanish, to be gone,' two verbs which are synonymous in meaning. Second, this compound carries with it some classical flavor, as most verbal compounds composed of near synonyms do, e.g. pàiqiǎn 'to dispatch, to send,' chuánshòu 'to impart, to instruct,' and dīfú 'to lower, to stoop.'¹⁰ However, as we saw in Chapter III, the suffix -le tends not to occur with expressions containing classical flavor. Third, the status and usage of the compound is not yet clear. Generally speaking, it occurs as an "appearance/disappearance" verb, and therefore is an intransitive one, although no information of this kind is available in the

textbooks, grammars, and dictionaries we consulted.¹¹ Yet the author apparently used it transitively in clause (g). This practice is not only unusual, but perhaps also intentional on the part of the author as some kind of "literary license" (Chu, personal communication). As such, the use of -le may not follow the general rule. Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate to what extent the respondents would approximate the author's use of -le in this position.

Finally, in clause (i), which is the culmination of one of the discourse segments in sample (4.5), we find the adverb cái '(then and only) then.' The adverb is particularly interesting since, as DeFrancis (1963:242) points out, the verb modified by cái is never followed by -le. The author's non-use of -le after huídao 'return (to)' in clause (i), it seems, is due to the presence of cái in the clause. It is thus worthwhile to examine whether this mysterious cái constraint does affect native speakers' use of -le in the clause.

As the percentage figures indicate, the majority of the respondents were consistent with the author's usage of -le except in clause (g). Let us begin by examining the use of -le in the first discourse segment in this sample.¹² The first segment is composed of clauses (a)-(c), narrating three events about Heizi's mother: her remaining silent for a while, followed by her handing the miner's lamp to her

husband and culminating in her reminder that whether or not he gets the flour the following day, he should try to get back earlier. The fact that a predominant number of respondents (.88/.03) inserted -le after the stative verb chénmò 'silent' in clause (a), as the author did, indicates that even in non-peak clauses, a stative verb is in general suffixed with -le (thus allowing the use of the "cognate object" that follows) to narrate a past event, even if the verb is bisyllabic. The low percentage use of -le (.24/.18) after dìgěi 'give to' in clause (b) is expected, since it is a non-peak clause. In clause (c), which represents the peak event in the first discourse segment, -le is almost unanimously omitted (.03/.00) after the verb shuō 'say.' This confirms our observation above that the suffix does not occur with verbs of saying when they are followed by a direct quote. This is true even when the clause containing the verb of saying (i.e. shuō 'say' in (c)) represents the culminating event in a segment of discourse.

The second discourse segment in (4.5) consists of clauses (d)-(f) and focuses on Heizi's father, Shizhuang. It narrates three actions he performed: (i) his taking the lamp from his wife, (ii) his braving the cold wind and snow, and (iii) his walking away in a long stride, with the last one as the culmination. The unanimous insertion of -le after jiē 'receive' in clause (d) again confirms our observation that monosyllabic action verbs in Mandarin tend

to occur with the suffix, a realis marker, to recount what (has) happened. Clause (e) contains the concomitative aspect marker -zhe, denoting an action concurrent with the main verb zǒu 'walk' in clause (f). The use of -le is thus ruled out in (e). In clause (f), the culminating clause of the second discourse segment, we find that a great majority of the respondents (.85/.01) inserted LE after the main verb zǒu 'walk,' which is a monosyllabic action verb. As we pointed out, this instance of LE is in fact ambiguous. However, whatever its precise status is, the LE is required either to mark the peak event of this discourse segment (i.e. as the verbal suffix -le) or to signal the end of a discourse block (i.e. as the sentence-final le), separating the second discourse segment from the one that follows.

The third and last discourse segment in sample (4.5), with the focus shifted back to Heizi's mother, narrates a series of events in which she (i) first watched and watched until her husband had disappeared in the distance, (ii) then took a deep breath, and (iii) then and only then did she return to the house. As the percentage figures indicate, 49% of the respondents considered -le obligatory after xiāoshì 'disappear' in clause (g) while the rest regarded it either optional (4%) or completely unnecessary (47%). This shows that about half of the respondents were reluctant to use -le in this structure. As we mentioned earlier, the verbal compound not only carries some classical flavor but

also is indeterminate, so far as its precise status and usage is concerned. The fact that the respondents were almost evenly divided in their judgments about the use of -le in the clause strongly suggests that the status of xiāoshì 'disappear,' as it is used in (g), is uncertain. It is not clear what is responsible for this divided judgment--its classical flavor or its unusual transitive use in this structure, but it is apparent that the respondents had reservations about the use of -le with a verb which carries some classical flavor and whose transitivity status is still indeterminate.

The high percentage use of -le (.73/.10) after chōu 'draw out' in clause (h) can be explained by appealing to the fact that monosyllabic action verbs in Mandarin strongly tend to be suffixed with -le to recount what (has) happened. The fact that only a very small percentage of respondents (.04/.10) inserted -le after huídao 'return (to)' in clause (i) supports DeFrancis' observation that the verb modified by cái is in general not followed by -le. DeFrancis, however, did not provide any explanation as to why the suffix is not allowed in the clause containing cái. He notes merely that "the adverb cái '(then and only) then' is used before the second of two verbs to indicate that the action of the second verb occurred only after that of the first verb was completed" (1963:242), as in

- (4.6) Wǒ shuō-le sān cǐ, tā cái tīngjiàn.
I say-le three times he then hear

'I said (it) three times and only then did he hear me.'

With respect to the non-use of -le in clause (4.5i), a possible explanation is that the semantics of cái may have exerted some influence. The adverb cái is in fact more appropriately analyzed as a marker of the irrealis mode. That is, the focus of information in clauses containing cái is on the non-occurrence of an event until another event takes place. This explains why sometimes cai is also translated as 'not . . . until . . .'. In the case of (4.5i), then, the focus of information is on the non-occurrence of the event represented by the clause (i.e. (her) returning to the house) until the event in (4.5h) (i.e. (her) taking a deep breath) had taken place. Seen in this way, clauses containing cái place more emphasis on the irrealis mode and thus are incompatible with the suffix -le, which, as we have seen, serves as a marker of "realis" in Chinese narrative discourse. This thus provides a natural explanation for the extremely low percentage of -le in (4.5i).

Next, let us examine test item four, rendered below as (4.7):

- (4.7) a. Dì-èr-tiān wǔhòu, wǒ shàng yóujúú
 the-next-day afternoon I to post-office
 qù .00/.00 lǐng-le .15/.19 qián
 go get money
- b. zài tàiyáng shài-zhe de dàjiē-shàng
 at sun bask-ZHE DE big-street-LOC
 zǒu-le .89/.06 yìhuǐr
 walk a-while

- c. hūér juéde shēn-shàng jiù línchū-le
suddenly feel body-LOC then drip-out
.54/.24 xǔdō hàn lái
much sweat come
- d. wǒ xiàng wǒ qiánhòuzuǒyòu de xíng rén
I toward I around DE passer-by
yí kàn .00/.00
one-look
- e. jiù bùzhībùjué bǎ tóu dīfǔ-le .51/.02
then unconsciously BA head lower
xiàqù
down
- f. wǒ tóu-shàng jǐng-shàng de hànzhū, gèng
I head-LOC neck-LOC DE sweat-drop more
tóng shèngyǔ sì de, yìkēyìkē
like heavy-rain similar DE drop-after-drop
zuān .76/.13 chūlái le .05/.03.
pierce out-come

'In the afternoon of the following day, after I went to the post-office to get the money (i.e. to have the check cashed), I walked for a while on the sun-baked street. Suddenly I felt I was sweating all over. I took a look at the passers-by around me, and without realizing it, I lowered my head (feeling awkward). The beads of perspiration on my head and neck, much like a heavy rain, poured out in drops.'

The sample in (4.7) was excerpted from a short story by Yu Tafu: Chūnfēng Chénzuì De Wǎngshang 'An Evening Intoxicated with the Spring Breeze.' In this passage, the author narrates an awkward experience he had on one hot spring afternoon, wearing a heavy coat while everyone else wore light clothing. In the original, the suffix -le occurs four times: after lǐng 'get' in clause (a), after zǒu 'walk' in (b), after línchū 'drip out' in (c), and after dīfǔ 'lower' in (e). The LE after the directional complement chūlái 'come out' in clause (f) can be identified as the

sentence-final le, the function of which is to wrap up the entire passage.

In this sample, we are interested in finding out to what extent the respondents would approximate the author's use of the suffix -le, specifically in clauses (a) and (e). In clause (a), the author used -le to indicate that the event of getting the money from the post-office took place prior to the event of his taking a walk on the sun-drenched street. This instance of -le, then, can be identified as the anteriority -le discussed in Chapter III, serving as an explicit signal of the temporal sequencing of the two events. In clause (e), the suffix -le is used after dīfǔ, a verbal compound consisting of two near synonyms dī 'lower' and fǔ 'stoop.' It is interesting to note that this compound, like the verbal compound xiāoshì 'disappear' discussed above, also carries with it some classical flavor. Therefore, the bǎ-phrase in clause (e) bǎ tóu dīfǔ-le xiàqù 'lowered the head' is often rendered in colloquial Chinese as bǎ tóu dī-le xiàqù, with dī-le 'lowered' replacing the more classical-flavored dīfǔ-le. Recall that in our discussion of the respondents' use of -le after xiāoshì 'disappear' in clause (g) of sample (4.5), we were not certain whether it is the classical flavor or the indeterminate status of the verbal compound that is responsible for the comparatively low percentage (.49/.04) of insertion. Therefore, the respondents' use of -le in

clause (e) of this sample will show to what extent an expression with some classical flavor would affect native speakers' use of the suffix.

As the percentage figures indicate, the respondents' use of the particle LE differs drastically from the author's in several places in sample (4.7). In what follows, we will examine each clause in turn. Let us begin with clause (a), where the respondents unanimously withheld the use of -le after qù 'go' and only a small number of them (.15/.19) inserted it after lǐng 'get.' The unanimous omission after the monosyllabic action verb qù 'go' seems puzzling, since, in the samples we have examined, monosyllabic action verbs in Mandarin show a strong tendency to occur with the suffix -le to recount what (has) happened. The non-use of the suffix in this position, however, can be explained by appealing to the fact that the verb qù 'go' and the verb-object compound lǐng qián 'get (the) money' form a close-knit notional unit, i.e. the purpose of 'going' (to the post-office) is to 'get the money.' In other words, qù lǐng qián is in essence a notional whole and it is inappropriate to insert -le after qù 'go' to break up this notionally integral whole. This is further supported by syntactic evidence such as negation and interrogation. Observe, for example, the following set of sentences:

- (4.8) a. Jīntiān wǎnshàng wǒ bú qù kàn tā le.
 today night I not go see he le

'I'm not going to see him tonight.'

- b. ?Jīntiān wǎnshang wǒ qù bú kàn tā le.
 c. Jīntiān wǎnshang nǐ qù bú qù kàn tā?
 today night you go not go see he
 'Are you going to see him tonight?'
 d. ?Jīntiān wǎnshang nǐ qù kàn bú kàn tā?

The sentence in (4.8b), with the negative particle bù 'not' placed between qù 'go' and kàn 'see,' is questionable. At best, it is interpreted as 'Tonight I'm going, but not to see him.' It is worth noting that in this interpretation, there must be a pause between qù 'go' and bù 'not.' This in fact shows that the only plausible interpretation of sentence (b) is that it involves two separate events, i.e. 'going' and 'not seeing.' By contrast, the sentence in (a) represents only one single event--a conceptual whole. Similarly, in the so-called A-not-A question, a special type of disjunctive question, the proper form is shown in (c). The interrogative form in (d) is again questionable and is at best interpreted as representing two separate events (i.e. 'going' and 'whether or not seeing (him)'). The syntactic evidence thus supports our observation that qu 'go' and the following verb-object compound together form a close-knit notional unit. This explains why the author also withheld the use of -le after qu 'go' in clause (4.7a), although the verb is a monosyllabic one. The unanimous omission of -le after qu 'go' in (4.9), excerpted from another test item included in the survey, further attests to this fact:¹³

- (4.9) Yúshì Míngdì biān pàiqiǎn .10/.31
 therefore Ming-emperor then send
 Cǎiyīn hé Qínjīng liǎngge guānyuán dào .03/.00
 Caiyin and Qinjing two-M official to
 Yīndù qù .00/.00 qiúqǔ .00/.01 fójīng.
 India go search Buddhist-sutra

'Therefore, Emperor Ming sent two officials, Caiyin and Qinjing, to India to search for the Buddhist sutras.'

In (4.10), an excerpt from another test item,¹⁴ the unanimous omission of -le after qù 'go' can be explained in the same way, i.e. qù wán forms a close-knit notional unit, because the purpose of 'going' (to the beach) is to 'play,' to 'have fun.'

- (4.10) Zuótiān wǒ gēn yíge péngyou dào hǎibiān
 yesterday I and one-M friend to sea-side
 qù .00/.00 wán .03/.05.
 go play

'Yesterday, a friend and I went to the beach to have fun.'

With respect to the use of -le after lǐng 'get' in clause (a), the percentage figures show that there is a sharp difference: whereas the author used the suffix, only a small number of respondents (.15/.19) inserted it in this position. As we pointed out earlier, the author's use of the suffix in this position is to mark explicitly the relative anteriority of the two events represented in clauses (a) and (b). For the majority of the respondents, however, this use of -le is not necessary. A possible explanation is that, for these respondents, the phrase qù lǐng qián 'to go to get the money' is treated as a notional whole and thus does not allow for the insertion of the

suffix. This is further supported both by the unanimous and the near unanimous omission (.00/.01) of -le in the excerpt of (4.9) quoted above, i.e. the purpose of the two officials' going to India was to search for the Buddhist sutras. The verb phrase qù qiúqǔ fójīng in (4.9) is thus an inseparable notional whole and it would be inappropriate to insert -le to break up this close-knit unit. The near unanimous omission of -le after lái 'come' (.00/.01) and after chuánshòu 'teach' (.01/.00) in (4.11) below, excerpted from the same test item as (4.9), further points to this fact:

- (4.11) a. Liǎngge rén yòu jìxù .00/.00
 two-M person then continue
 qiánjìn
 move-forward
- b. dào-le .89/.05 Yìndù
 arrive India
- c. yāoqǐng-le .40/.21 gāosēng Jiāyèmóténg
 invite high-monk Kasyapamatanga
 hé Zhúfǎlán yìtóng lái .00/.01
 and Dharmaraksa together come
 shǒudū Lùdyáng chuánshòu .01/.00
 capital Luoyang teach
 fójīng
 Buddhist-sutra

'The two (officials) then moved on and arrived in India. (They) invited (two) high Buddhist monks, Kasyapamatanga and Dharmaraksa, to come (together) to the capital, Luoyang, to teach the sutras.'

In (4.11), which follows but is separated from (4.9) by two clauses, the author narrates that after the two officials' arrival in India, they tendered an invitation to two renowned Buddhist monks, Kasyapamatanga and Dharmaraksa.

The purpose of the invitation is expressed in the complex verb phrase lái shǒudū Luòyáng chuánshòu fójīng 'to come to the capital, Luoyang, to teach the sutras.' The action verbs lái 'come' and qù 'go' in Mandarin, when followed by another verb (as in (4.10)) or a verb-object compound (as in (4.7a), (4.9), and (4.11)), express the purpose of 'coming' and 'going' (cf. DeFrancis, 1963:117). More importantly, the purpose phrase headed by lái and qù form a notional whole,¹⁵ so the insertion of -le is in general considered inappropriate except in cases where it is used to mark explicitly the anteriority of one event in relation to another, as used by the original author in (4.7a).

With respect to the low percentage use of -le after lǐng 'get' in (4.7a), Professor Chu (personal communication) has proposed an alternative explanation. He observes that the clause seems to function as a topic clause in that it is possible to insert particles like a or ya, which serve as explicit topic markers in Mandarin, separating the topic from the rest of the clauses in a discourse segment. For example, in (4.12), quoted from Tsao (1979:86), the particle a follows the topic zhèikē shù de yèzi 'the leaves of the tree' and separates it from the following comment clauses:

- (4.12) Zhèikē shù de yèzi a, yòu xiǎo yòu
 this-M tree DE leaves PART both small and
 cháng, hěn nánkàn.
 long very ugly

'The leaves of the tree, (they) are long and small; (they are) very ugly.'

Chu further notes that it is also possible to insert a subordinating temporal phrase . . . de shíhòu 'when . . . ' at the end of (4.7a) to make it an adverbial clause, as in (4.7a') below:

(4.7) a'. Wǒ shàng yóujú qù lǐng qián de
 I to post-office go get money DE
 shíhòu, . . .
 time

'When I went to the post-office to get the money, . . . '

From Chu's observations, it seems that the suffix -le is not favored in what may be treated as (i) a topic clause or (ii) an adverbial clause where the anteriority of the event to the main event is not salient.

The foregoing discussion on the drastic difference between the author's use of -le after lǐng 'get' in (4.7a), on the one hand, and the low percentage use by the respondents, on the other, suggests that there are perceptual differences as to whether -le should be used as an explicit signal of anteriority between two (or more) events or simply left out for fear that its use would otherwise break up a close-knit unit treated as a notional whole. Furthermore, as Chu has suggested, if the clause can alternatively be analyzed as topic or an adverbial clause, the use of the suffix is in general not favored.

Next, let us examine clause (4.7b), where the majority of the respondents (.89/.06), like the author, inserted -le after zǒu 'walk.' This again confirms our observation that

monosyllabic action verbs in Mandarin tend to take the realis marker -le to recount what (has) happened. In clause (4.7c), the author used -le after línchū 'drip out.' It seems that the suffix is used here to mark the clause as the peak event of the discourse segment consisting of clauses (4.7a)-(4.7c). That is, the author first went to the post-office to get the money, then took a walk on the sun-drenched street, and as the result of the walking (with his heavy coat on), he felt he was sweating all over. Clause (4.7c), therefore, can be regarded as the culmination of this series of events. As the percentage figures indicate, 54% of the respondents considered -le obligatory in this position and another 24% considered it optional. This seems to suggest that for the majority of the respondents, the clause does indeed represent a potential break between discourse segments, separating clauses (4.7a)-(4.7c), as one unitary segment, from other segments of discourse in (4.7).

In clause (4.7d), we are interested in finding out how the respondents would react to yíkàn 'one look,' which is in fact a shortened form of the verb phrase kàn yíkàn 'look-one-look, i.e. take a look,' with the main verb kàn 'look' deleted. The fact that -le is unanimously omitted in this clause shows that native speakers would not use this suffix with a nominal, however superficially verb-like it may be. Clause (4.7d) is followed by (4.7e), and together seem to form another discourse segment, i.e. the author first took a

look at the passers-by around him (who all wore light clothes) and (feeling awkward that he was the only one wearing a heavy coat) unconsciously lowered his head. This is perhaps why the author used -le after dīfu[✓] 'lower' in (4.7e)--to indicate that the clause represents the culminating event of the second discourse segment in (4.7). However, the percentage figures show that only 51% of the respondents regarded the use of -le obligatory in this position. The rest considered it either optional (2%) or completely unnecessary (47%). A possible explanation for the almost evenly divided judgments is that synonymous verbal compounds in Mandarin, as we pointed out earlier, in general are classical-flavored. This then supports our observation in Chapter III that in general the suffix -le does not occur with expressions carrying some classical flavor. However, the fact that 51% of the respondents considered it obligatory in this clause further suggests that perceptual differences exist among native speakers as to whether a certain expression should be classified as classical or not. Of course, the fact that the clause represents the peak event must have also contributed significantly in prompting the respondents to use -le in this position.

In (4.7f), the author used the sentence-final le at the end of the clause. As we suggested earlier, this le is used to mark the end of the entire passage. However, the

percentage figures show that the respondents differed drastically from the author's original use. Instead of using le after the directional complement chūlái 'come out' to wrap up the passage, the majority of the respondents (.76/.13) inserted the suffix -le after the verb zuān 'pierce.' Only an extremely small number of respondents (.05/.03) inserted the sentence-final le, as the author did. This divergence in the use of LE was not expected and is in fact quite perplexing, particularly in view of our observation that sentence-final le functions as a discourse-final particle, marking the end of a discourse unit/block.

To investigate the interplay between the suffix -le and the sentence-final le, we examined the respondents' insertion of LE in clause (4.7f) and found the following six patterns (P), where X represents obligatory LE, 0, optional LE, and Ø, absence of LE:

- (4.13) (P1) zuān X chūlái Ø (60 subjects)
 (P2) zuān X chūlái 0 (1 subject)
 (P3) zuān 0 chūlái Ø (10 subjects)
 (P4) zuān Ø chūlái X (4 subjects)
 (P5) zuān Ø chūlái 0 (1 subject)
 (P6) zuān Ø chūlái Ø (4 subjects)

Pattern 1, the most common pattern of response, was used by sixty subjects. The second most common pattern is (P3), used by ten subjects. Pattern 4, the pattern employed by the original author, was used only by four subjects. It

is interesting to note that none of the subjects used the so-called "Double-LE" construction, inserting obligatory LE in both positions, i.e. zuān-le chūlái le 'dripped out.' It seems, at first glance, that the verb zuān 'pierce' may have exerted some influence. We recall that in general monosyllabic action verbs in Mandarin occur with the realis marker -le to recount past happenings. Therefore, it is possible that the monosyllabic nature of the verb forced the respondents to insert the suffix after it and somehow reduced their use of the sentence-final le at the end of the clause. This seems to be a reasonable hypothesis. However, it explains only why the majority of the respondents inserted -le after zuān 'pierce' but does not account for the low percentage use of le at the end of the clause.¹⁶ Here we see the need for a more detailed study of the interplay between the suffix and the sentence-final particle in the so-called "Double-LE" construction.

Before we further investigate this construction, let us first examine test item five, reproduced below as (4.14):

- (4.14) a. "Quánjùdé" zhèige diàn yú yījiǔwǔsì
 Quanjude this-M restaurant at 1954
 nián yījiǔwǔjiǔ nián xiān hòu zài
 year 1959 year first after at
 Běijīng fánhuá de Xī-Chángān-jie
 Beijing prosperous DE west-Changan-street
 hé Wángfǔjīng zēngshè-le .60/.30 liǎngge
 and Wangfujing add-establish two-M
 fēndiàn .00/.00
 branch

- b. yījiǔqījiǔ nián sìyuè quán guó guīmó
1979 year April whole country scope
zuì dà de Běijīng Kǎoyā diàn
most big DE Beijing roast-duck restaurant
qīcéng xīn lóu zài Hépíngmén
seven-story new building at Hepingmen
lùkǒu luòchéng LE .71/.16
intersection complete
- c. jìnniánlái suízhe Zhōng-wài wénhuà
in-recent-years along Sino-foreign culture
jiāoliú shìyè de fāzhǎn, Běijīng
exchange business DE development Beijing
Kǎoyā hé "Quánjudé" diànhào yě
roast-duck and Quanjudé store-name also
piāo .04/.15 yáng guò .04/.15 hǎi
float ocean cross sea
- d. chuándào .35/.23 guówài,
spread-to overseas
- e. zhèi jiù shǐ .00/.03 gèngduō de rén
this then make more DE people
chángdào-le .56/.28 sè-xiāng-wèi-méi
taste smell-delicious-color-
de Běijīng Kǎoyā le .15/.04.
pretty DE Beijing roast-duck

'The Quanjudé Restaurant opened up two branches on the prosperous West Changan Boulevard and Wangfujing Street in the years 1954 and 1959, respectively. In April of 1979, a new seven-story Beijing Roast Duck Restaurant, the largest of its kind in China, was built on Hepingmen Street. In recent years, as cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries develop, both Beijing Roast Duck and the fame of Quanjudé Restaurant, crossing the seas and oceans, went abroad. This made it possible for more people to taste the delicious and splendid-appetizing Beijing Roast Duck.'

This sample is the concluding passage of Běijīng Kǎoyā 'Beijing Roast Duck,' one of the short stories selected in the popular Chinese reader Huángliáng Mèng 'Golden Millet Dream.' This passage is preceded by a detailed account of

the origin of this famous Chinese gourmet dish and the processes involved in making it. The focus of this concluding passage is on the Quanjude Restaurant, the most renowned roast duck restaurant in China. The author used four LE's in this passage. The instance of LE after zēngshè 'add-establish' in clause (a) is the suffix -le, so is the one after chángdào 'taste' in clause (e). The LE at the end of the passage, after Běijīng Kǎoyā 'Beijing Roast Duck,' on the other hand, is the sentence-final le, which serves the function of wrapping up the passage and, by extension, the entire story. At the end of clause (b), after luòchéng 'complete,' we find another instance of LE, but it cannot be unambiguously identified as either the suffix -le or the sentence-final le. As the percentage figures indicate, with the exception of the sentence-final le at the end of clause (e), the respondents, on the whole, agreed with the author's uses of LE in this passage.

Clause (4.14a) focuses on the addition of two branches of the Quanjude Restaurant on Beijing's prosperous West Changan Boulevard and Wangfujing Street in the years 1954 and 1959, respectively. The percentage figures show that the majority of the respondents (60%) followed the author's use, inserting an obligatory -le after the verbal compound zēngshè 'add-establish.' This high percentage use of -le in the first clause of sample (4.14) seems quite puzzling, at first look. However, if we compare the focus of clause (a)

with that of clause (b), we find a significant difference in terms of information content. In clause (a), the focus is on the addition of the two branches, whereas in clause (b), the emphasis is on the completion of a new seven-story building, the largest of its kind in China. The fact that there is a twenty-year time lapse between the events represented in the two clauses shows that in actuality the clauses each maintains a uniform orientation and thus each qualifies as a discourse segment in its own right.¹⁷ This then explains why both the author and the majority of the respondents used -le in clause (a)--to indicate that the clause serves simultaneously as a discourse segment and the peak in the segment.

At the end of clause (a), it is possible, structurally speaking, to insert a sentence-final le, to indicate a "change of state" meaning, i.e. two new branch restaurants had been added. The respondents, however, unanimously omitted it. This omission can be explained by appealing to the fact that le in Mandarin serves as a discourse-final particle, and as such, it is in general withheld until the end of a discourse block is reached. The low percentage use of le after Tiānzhūjiào 'Catholicism' and after xiāoshòu 'emaciated' in (4.15), excerpted from another test item, further points to this fact:¹⁸

- (4.15) a. Tā huídào .15/.20 Měiguó yǐhòu,
she return-to America after

- b. jiù xīn-le .72/.11 Tiānzhǔjiào .08/.04
then believe Catholicism
- c. yì-tiān-yì-tiān xiāoshòu .05/.01
day-in-day-out emaciated
- d. dào Shèngdànjié de shíhòu, yǐjīng bù-
to Christmas DE time already not-
chéng-rén-yàng le .85/.11.
as-human-shape

'After she returned to the U.S., she became a Catholic. (But) as the days went by, she grew more and more emaciated. When Christmas came, she was (so thin and so weak that she looked) like a skeleton.'

At the end of clauses (b)-(d), the sentence-final le could potentially be used to denote a "change of state" meaning, i.e. her having become a Catholic, her having grown emaciated (as the days passed by), and her becoming to look like a skeleton (at the time of Christmas). The sharp contrast between the extremely low percentage ((.08/.04) and (.05/.01), respectively) use of le in clauses (b) and (c), on the one hand, and the high percentage (.85/.11) in clause (d), on the other, is indicative of the discourse-final use of le in Chinese narrative discourse. That is, the events narrated in clauses (b) and (c) are non-discourse-final. Therefore, the potential use of le to indicate a "change of state" meaning at the end of these clauses, though possible, is in fact undesirable in terms of the over-all discourse structure of sample (4.15). This explains why the majority of the respondents withheld its use until the end of clause (d)--the concluding portion of the discourse unit composed of clauses (a)-(d). The extremely low percentage (.08/.04)

after Tiānzhujiào 'Catholicism' in clause (b) further shows that the sentence-final le in the so-called "Double-LE" construction is in general withheld discourse-internally.

The unanimous omission of le after fēndiàn 'branch-store' in clause (4.14a) is therefore expected, since the clause is non-discourse-final. At the end of clause (4.14b), 71% of the respondents inserted an obligatory LE and another 16%, an optional LE. This instance of LE, as we mentioned earlier, is ambiguous between the suffix -le and the sentence-final le. As the suffix -le, it serves to mark the clause as a discourse segment distinct from the one represented in clause (4.14a), since the two clauses have different foci and are separated, temporally speaking, from each other by a twenty-year time lapse. On the other hand, the LE in (4.14b) can alternatively be analyzed as the sentence-final le. An important question that immediately arises is: What function does this le serve in the clause? This requires a closer examination of the over-all discourse structure of the passage in (4.14).

The clauses in (4.14a) and (4.14b), as we recall, can each be analyzed as a discourse segment, focusing on the addition of two branch restaurants and the completion of a new seven-story building, respectively, in different locations and at different times. These two clauses, however, seem to form a unit of discourse and is distinctly separated from the rest of the passage by the use of the

sentence-final le. As we pointed out, the topic of the passage in (4.14) is about the Quanjude Restaurant, the most renowned roast duck restaurant in China. Upon close examination, the passage can indeed be broken into two topical units, one focusing on the restaurant's expansion within China proper (as in clauses (a) and (b)) and the other on the spread of its fame overseas (as in clauses (c)-(e)). The use of le at the end of clause (b) therefore confirms our observation in Chapter III that le can be used as a boundary marker between topical units within a stretch of discourse. This use of le is further seen in the high percentage of insertion in (4.16) below:

(4.16) a. (Shùshí) yòu zài Běifēi hàodào
(Shushi) then at North-Africa stay-to
.11/.09 guònián
Chinese-New-Year

b. yì gǎndào .06/.03 Měiguó
as-soon-as hurry-to U.S.

c. tā yǐjīng guòshì-le .84/.05.
she already pass-away

'(Shushi) then stayed in North Africa until the Chinese New Year. As soon as he hurriedly arrived in the U.S., she (Shushi's former girl-friend) had already passed away.'

The clauses in (4.16) occur in the same test sample as (4.15). The author's use of the sentence-final le in clause (c) of (4.16) seems to serve the dual function of (i) expressing a "change of state" meaning, i.e. Shushi's former girl-friend had already passed away upon his arrival in the U.S., and (ii) marking clause (c) as the end of the topical

unit consisting of (4.16a)-(4.16c). That is, the clauses in (4.16) focus on Shushi: his staying in North Africa, his hurrying to the U.S., and his finding out about her death. These clauses thus constitute a topical unit, distinct from the other topical unit (i.e. (4.15)), which is mainly about his former girl-friend: her becoming a Catholic, her growing emaciated, and her becoming to look like a skeleton.

The foregoing discussion on the use of LE after luòchéng in (4.14b) seems to suggest two things. Firstly, whatever the precise status of LE is, the fact that both the author and the majority of the respondents used it in the clause shows that it is necessary either as the suffix -le or the sentence-final le. Secondly, and more importantly, it shows that the segmentation of a stretch of discourse into smaller coherent units of discourse is not an easy task. For example, we saw that the clause in (4.14a) and that in (4.14b) each maintain a unified orientation and thus qualify as forming separate discourse segments in their own right. However, the two discourse segments, as a whole, have a focus that is distinct from the rest of the clauses in (4.14). In this sense, then, they also form a larger unit of discourse, which we have conveniently labelled as a "topical" unit. This topical unit, together with the one in (4.14c)-(4.14e), make up an even larger unit of discourse--the passage in (4.14). This seems to suggest that a discourse unit (in the sense that the whole passage of

(4.14) is one such unit) is a larger constituent of discourse than a discourse segment. However, as we recall, a discourse unit is a relative term: it may be as large as a complete story, a paragraph, a conversation, or as small as a group of sentences or clauses maintaining a uniform orientation. It is thus possible for a group of clauses or sentences to be analyzed as forming at the same time a discourse segment and a discourse unit in its own right.

For example, the LE after zǒu 'walk' at the end of clause (4.5f) can be analyzed as the suffix -le, marking the peak of the discourse segment composed of (4.5d)-(4.5f), all pertaining to Shizhuang, the protagonist's husband. Alternatively, it can also be analyzed as the sentence-final le. This le marks the boundary between the two segments/ (topical-) units of discourse as in (4.5d)-(4.5f) and (4.5g)-(4.5i), respectively, with the latter focusing on the protagonist herself. Furthermore, the LE at the end of (4.4t), the concluding clause of the passage, also illustrates the same point. As the suffix -le, it marks the clause as representing the culminating event in the discourse segment consisting of clauses (4.4r)-(4.4t). On the other hand, as the sentence-final le, it signals not only the end of the discourse segment but also the end of the discourse unit represented by the entire passage in (4.4).

A discourse unit is thus a relative term and a rigid definition is in fact very difficult to formulate. We have approached it only indirectly, identifying it as a constituent of variable size which deals, functionally speaking, with the same topic. This functional definition is necessarily fuzzy for two reasons. First, only boundary markers are present, and the lack of internal markers is only a negative indicator. Second, depending on the larger context, a given stretch of discourse can be just a discourse segment or an entire discourse unit. However, our analysis of discourse data requires this kind of flexibility if it is to account for the data, since context and world knowledge would inevitably affect one's perception of what constitutes a discourse unit/segment.

We now return to our discussion of sample (4.14) and examine the remaining clauses (i.e.(c)--(e)), which, as we suggested, constitute the second topical unit of discourse. The fact that only a small number of respondents inserted the suffix -le after piāo 'float' and guò 'cross' in clause (c) requires close scrutiny. These two verbs are monosyllabic action verbs, and as such, tend to be suffixed with the realis marker -le to recount past happenings. The phrase piāo-yáng-guò-hǎi 'crossing the seas and oceans' is, in fact, a set phrase and is in general treated as an integral whole. The insertion of -le in this phrase is thus inappropriate. Furthermore, like most set phrases in

Mandarin, it also carries some classical flavor. This explains why neither the author nor the majority of the respondents used the suffix in (4.14c). There are two other facts regarding the respondents' use of -le in this clause which are worth mentioning here. First, those respondents who inserted an obligatory or optional -le after piāo 'float' also did so after guò 'cross.' This shows that a rule of consistency was in operation for the respondents. Secondly, if we compare the percentage use of the suffix in this clause with that in (4.7e), after dīfú 'lower' (.51/.02), we find a sharp difference, although both clauses contain expressions with classical flavor. It is worth noting, however, that clause (4.7e) is the peak of the events narrated in clauses (4.7d)-(4.7e). This suggests that in clauses containing expressions with classical flavor, the suffix -le is more frequently used if the clause represents the peak event in a discourse segment. This, however, should be taken only as a guideline, since, as we pointed out, there are perceptual differences among native speakers as to whether an expression should be classified as classical or not.

In (4.14d), only a relatively low percentage of respondents (35%) inserted an obligatory -le after chuándào 'spread to.' This low percentage use of the suffix is in fact anticipated, since the event narrated in this clause does not qualify as a peak event. As suggested above,

clauses (4.14c)-(4.14e) can be treated as a topical unit, distinct from the one consisting of (4.14a) and (4.14b), about the addition of two branch restaurants of Quanjude and the completion of a new seven-story building. Each of the three clauses which make up the second topical unit narrates a separate event, yet together they also form a discourse segment. That is, after crossing the seas and oceans (metaphorically speaking), the Beijing Roast Duck and the name of the Quanjude Restaurant became widely known abroad, thus enabling more people to taste this gourmet Chinese dish. Therefore, clause (4.14e) but not (4.14d), represents the peak of this three-event discourse segment. This explains why the author did not use -le in (4.14d) and why the majority of respondents considered the suffix either unnecessary (42%) or simply optional (23%).

In (4.14e), the culmination of the events narrated in (4.14c)-(4.14e), we find, first of all, that an extremely low percentage (.00/.03) of the respondents inserted -le after shǐ 'make.' The morpheme shǐ is actually one of a limited set of causative markers in Mandarin.¹⁹ A possible explanation for the low percentage is that causative markers serve merely as grammatical signals and do not represent the nucleus of the predicate. This is why they do not take aspect markers such as -zhe, -guo, etc. Seen in this way, they function very much like the auxiliary verb (e.g. huì 'can,' néng 'be able to'), which, as we saw in the review of

Chao (1968), never occurs with the suffix -le. Secondly, after chángdào 'taste,' a significant number of respondents inserted -le, as the author did. This use of the suffix is understandable, since the clause does represent the peak of the discourse segment consisting of clauses (4.14c)-(4.14e). At the end of the clause, the author used the sentence-final le after Běijīng Kǎoyā 'Beijing Roast Duck.' We recall that the passage in (4.14) is the concluding portion of a short story about Beijing Roast Duck. The author's use of le then serves to mark the end of the passage and, by extension, the conclusion of the whole story. As the percentage figures indicate, only a small number of respondents (.15/.04) inserted le in this position. This low percentage, like the one at the end of (4.7f), threatens our hypothesis of the sentence-final le as a discourse-final particle, which is supported by the respondents' use of le in samples (4.15) and (4.16).

In our discussion of clause (4.7f), we speculated that the monosyllabic nature of the verb zuān 'pierce' may have forced the respondents to insert the suffix -le after it and somehow reduced the possibility of their use of the sentence particle le at the end of the clause. This hypothesis, though reasonable, is not entirely convincing. For example, the main verb in clause (4.14e) is chángdào 'taste,' a bisyllabic verb, but only 15% of the respondents regarded le as obligatory and another 4% considered it optional. It is

possible, of course, that being a monosyllabic action verb may have attracted the higher percentage of obligatory use of -le (i.e. 76% of the respondents inserted an obligatory -le after zuān 'pierce' in (4.7f) and only 56% of them did so after chángdào 'taste' in (4.14e)), but this does not provide a satisfactory account of the low percentage use of the sentence particle le at the end of both clauses.

We turn, next, to examine the respondents' use of LE in (4.14e), specifically after chángdào 'taste' and Běijīng Kǎoyā 'Beijing Roast Duck' to see how the suffix and the sentence particle interact in this clause. The results of the respondents' insertion fall into the following nine patterns and indicate a wide range of possibilities:

- (4.17) (P1) chángdào X Běijīng Kǎoyā Ø (41)
 (P2) chángdào X Běijīng Kǎoyā X (3)
 (P3) chángdào X Běijīng Kǎoyā O (1)
 (P4) chángdào O Běijīng Kǎoyā Ø (17)
 (P5) chángdào O Běijīng Kǎoyā X (4)
 (P6) chángdào O Běijīng Kǎoyā O (1)
 (P7) chángdào Ø Běijīng Kǎoyā O (1)
 (P8) chángdào Ø Běijīng Kǎoyā X (5)
 (P9) chángdào Ø Běijīng Kǎoyā Ø (7)

(X=obligatory use; O=optional use; Ø=non-use; the number in parentheses indicates the number of respondents using the pattern.)

Pattern 1, the most common response, was used by 41 subjects. This is followed by (P4), used by 17 subjects.

In these two patterns, the subjects inserted an obligatory or optional -le, but considered the sentence-final le unnecessary. The third most common pattern of response is (P9), used by 7 subjects who considered that neither the suffix nor the sentence particle was necessary in the clause. It is interesting to note that only nine subjects inserted -le after chángdào 'taste' and le after Běijīng Kǎoyā 'Beijing Roast Duck,' as in (P2), (P3), (P5) and (P6). Furthermore, as the patterns show, only a total of 12 subjects considered the use of the sentence particle le obligatory in (4.14e).

Not revealed in the patterns of response in (4.13) and (4.17) but significant with respect to the respondents' use of LE in clauses (4.7f) and (4.14e) is the fact that a rule of consistency seemed to be in operation among the respondents. We compared the insertion of LE in these two clauses and found the following patterns regarding the use of the suffix -le:

(4.18)	(P1)	zuān chángdào	X X	(38 subjects)
	(P2)	zuān chángdào	0 0	(7 subjects)
	(P3)	zuān chángdào	∅ ∅	(2 subjects)
	(P4)	zuān chángdào	X 0	(13 subjects)
	(P5)	zuān chángdào	X ∅	(10 subjects)

(P6)	zuān	0	
	chángdào	X	(2 subjects)
(P7)	zuān	0	
	chángdào	∅	(1 subject)
(P8)	zuān	∅	
	chángdào	X	(5 subjects)
(P9)	zuān	∅	
	chángdào	0	(2 subjects)

As (P1)-(P3) in (4.18) show, over half of the respondents were consistent in their use of the suffix in these clauses: 38 subjects (48%) who inserted an obligatory -le after zuān also did so after chángdào; 7 subjects (19%) who considered -le optional after zuān also regarded it optional after chángdào; and 2 subjects (2.5%) who thought -le unnecessary after zuān also left it out after chángdào.

With respect to the use of the sentence particle le at the end of these two clauses, the respondents' patterns of insertion are as follows:

(4.19)	(P1)	chūlái		∅	
		Běijīng	Kǎoyā	∅	(59 subjects)
	(P2)	chūlái		∅	
		Běijīng	Kǎoyā	X	(12 subjects)
	(P3)	chūlái		∅	
		Běijīng	Kǎoyā	0	(3 subjects)
	(P4)	chūlái		X	
		Běijīng	Kǎoyā	∅	(4 subjects)
	(P5)	chūlái		0	
		Běijīng	Kǎoyā	∅	(2 subjects)

Among the five patterns in (4.19), (P1) is the most common and shows that 59 subjects (74%) who considered le

unnecessary after the directional complement chūlái also regarded it unnecessary after the noun phrase Běijīng Kaoyā.

The patterns of response discussed above indicate that well over half of the respondents were consistent in their use of LE in clauses (4.7f) and (4.14e). However, they do not explain why the respondents' insertion of the sentence particle le was so surprisingly sparse in these two clauses. This is very puzzling, since the original authors apparently used it to mark the end of the discourse unit. In order to account for this divergence in the use of le between the original authors, on the one hand, and the majority of the respondents, on the other, we examine in greater depth the interplay between the suffix -le and the sentence-final le in the so-called "Double-LE" construction in the next section.

4.3 The "Double-LE" Construction

We re-examined the data we collected and found that among the total of sixty-two samples, there are only four instances of the so-called "Double-LE" construction. They are cited below as (4.20)-(4.23):

- (4.20) Xiàng Huáng Shāngǔ zhèyàng de dà wénxué
 like Huang Shangu this-kind DE big literature
 jiā, shī, shū, huà, sān
 master poetry calligraphy painting three
 jué de rén, bǐng-bú-shì jīnshēng cái
 excellence DE person by-no-means this-life then
 kāishǐ dúshū de, qiánshì yǐjīng
 begin study-book DE prior-life already
 dú-le hěnduō shū le.
 study-le many book le

(Lún Huí)

'(For) a great literary figure such as Huang Shangu, (who) excelled not only in poetry but also in calligraphy and painting, it was not in this life that he began his study, (but on the contrary) he had already studied many books in the previous life.'

- (4.21) (Lǎorén wèntí) zài wǒ guó qínghuàng suǐrán
old-age issue at I country situation though
hái bú shífēn yánzhòng, dàn yě dào-le
still not very serious but also arrive-le
bìxū cóng-cháng-jì-yì de shíhòu le.
must do-long-range-planning DE time le

(Lǎorén Wèntí)

'Although in our country, the issue (of aging) is not yet a very serious one, (but) it is time we started a long-range planning (on this issue now).'

- (4.22) Búyào xiàng wǒ yíyàng, xiǎng xiàojìng
do-not like I one-kind plan-to be-filial-to
mǔqīn shí, què yǐ shǐqù-le jīhuì le.
mother time yet already lose-le chance le

(Wǒde Pò Mǎoyī)

'Don't follow my (sad) example--when (I) plan to show filial piety to (my) mother, there is (already) no longer any chance (for me to do so).'

- (4.23) Zhèi jiù shǐ gèngduō de rén chángdào-le
this then make more DE people taste-le
sè-xiāng-wēi-měi de Běijīng
smell-delicious-color-pretty DE Beijing
Kǎoyā le.
roast-duck le

(Běijīng Kǎoyā)

'This then made it possible for more people to taste the delicious and splendid-appetizing Beijing Roast Duck.'

The sample in (4.23) is in fact clause (4.14e) discussed above. Sample (4.20), like (4.23), occurs as the

concluding portion of a story. The use of the sentence-final le in these two samples is thus to mark not only the end of the respective samples but also the end of the two stories. The samples in (4.21) and (4.22), on the other hand, do not occur at the end of the narratives of which they are a part. However, they do occur in positions of the narrative which represent the end of a discourse block. This explains why the original authors used le in these two samples--as a boundary marker between discourse units.

The original authors' use of the sentence-final le in the above samples thus confirms our hypothesis of le as a discourse-final particle in Mandarin. Furthermore, it shows that le is used at those positions in the narrative which signal the end of a discourse block, regardless of whether the main verb in the culminating clause is monosyllabic (as in (4.20) and (4.21)) or bisyllabic (as in (4.22) and (4.23)). It also suggests that the size (i.e. in terms of the number of characters) of the intervening constituent between the main verb and the sentence-final le may not be the only conditioning factor for the non-use of the "Double-LE" construction in clause (4.7f). Recall that in our discussion of the clause, we saw that none of the respondents used the pattern: zuān-le chūlái le 'dripped out.' We speculated at the time that the size of the directional complement chūlái 'come out' was perhaps responsible for the non-use of the construction. However,

as (4.20) and (4.22) show, this may not be the sole determining factor. Specifically, in (4.22), the intervening constituent jīhuì 'chance,' like chūlái 'come out,' is also two characters long. Yet the author used both the suffix -le and the sentence-final le in the culminating clause.

The foregoing discussion shows that formal criteria can not be shown to be fully responsible for the use of LE in discourse. Specifically, it suggests that, to account for the low percentage of the sentence-final le in clauses (4.7f) and (4.14e), we need to resort to factors other than purely formal ones.

In our discussion of the sentence-final le in Chapter III, we saw that its occurrence in Chinese narrative discourse can be accounted for in the following ways. Typically, it is used in cases where a "change of state" meaning is involved. We have examined several instances of this (e.g. samples (3.33) and (3.34) in Chapter III) and have noted that such occurrences of le is in general withheld until the end of a discourse unit is reached (e.g. samples (3.37) and (3.38) in Chapter III and sample (4.15) in this chapter). There are many other instances in which the presence of le can only be explained on discourse grounds, i.e. it is needed to mark the end of a discourse unit (e.g. samples (3.35) and (3.36) in Chapter III). Furthermore, in many instances, specifically at the end of a

discourse unit, the presence of le can be accounted for both on discourse and semantic grounds, i.e. in addition to marking the end of a discourse unit, it also expresses a "change of state" meaning (e.g. clauses (4.15d) and (4.16c) in this chapter).

If we now examine the samples in (4.20)-(4.22) above, we find that the sentence-final le serves the dual function of "change of state" marker and discourse-final signal in all three instances. In (4.20), the changed state is indicated by the assertion that it was not in this life that Huang Shangu began his study but (on the contrary) he had already read many books in the previous life. The changed state in (4.21) is (the author's) urge that it is time now the society as a whole started a long-range planning on the "old age" issue. Furthermore, in (4.22), the change is from the previous state in which the author could have shown filial piety to his beloved mother to the present state in which he is no longer able to do so (since she has already passed away).

More importantly, without the le's at the end, the passages in (4.20)-(4.22) would become incomplete, as if the author intends to say something more and yet somehow decides not to do so. Therefore, by using le at the end of these samples, the authors not only explicitly convey a "change of state" meaning in each instance but also indicate to the reader that they have either completed the story (i.e.

(4.20)) or reached the end of a discourse/topical block (i.e. (4.21) and (4.22)).

Regarding the function of the sentence-final le at the end of sample (4.23) (i.e. clause (4.14e)), we have already shown that the author used le to mark the end of the passage, and, by extension, the entire story. In other words, given the context which the author had at the time of writing, the sentence-final le was indeed required to indicate to the reader that the clause represents the ending point of the story. For the respondents, however, such a context was not available. It is thus possible that for the majority of the respondents, this discourse-final use of le was not necessary and, as a result, they did not insert it at the end of the clause. This then is another case where the use of le as a discourse-final particle is influenced by the context available to the speaker/reader.

In our discussion of sample (3.39) in Chapter III, repeated below as (4.24) without translation, we saw the important role context plays in determining whether or not le should be used as a discourse-final particle in a narrative discourse:

- (4.24) a. Zài jìngxuǎn huódòng wèi kāishǐ qián
 b. xǐng-xǐng-sè-sè de xuǎnjǔ xiànxàng
 yǐjīng chūxiàn zài shìmiànshàng .73/.08
 c. xiāngxìn zài jìngxuǎn huódòng kāishǐ hòu
 d. jiāng yǒu gèng biǎomiànhuà de jīngcǎi
 huàzhāo .00/.00

e. zhèi dàibiǎo-le míngzhǔzhèngzhì de yí-miàn

f. hái yǒu liǎng tiān .42/.12

g. dàjiā kěyǐ shì-mù-yǐ-dài le .08/.12.

Let us focus only on clause (4.24g), where the author used le but the majority of the respondents did not. As we recall, the sample in (4.24) appeared in a newspaper report on the pre-election campaigning of the candidates for membership in the Taipei City Council. The author had reported many aspects of the campaigning before coming to (4.24), the concluding part of the report. For the author, then, the sentence-final le is needed to wrap up the passage and, by extension, the entire report. However, most of the respondents, without this larger context to serve as a guide, opted not to use le, specifically in view of the fact that the sentence particle is not favored in clauses expressing a future expectation such as (4.24g).²⁰

The foregoing discussion on the divergence between the author's and the respondents' use of le in clauses (4.14e) and (4.24g) shows that context plays a significant role in affecting native speakers' use of the discourse-final le in a Chinese narrative. Our discussion, however, presupposes that the original author's use of le in (4.14e) is for discourse reasons only. However, as we pointed out earlier, the use of le in discourse-final position can be motivated on semantic as well as discourse grounds. In fact, with le, the clause in (4.14e) also denotes a "change of state"

meaning, i.e. the spread overseas of the Beijing Roast Duck and the fame of Quanjude Restaurant has now made it possible for more people to taste the delicious and splendid-appetizing Beijing Roast Duck.²¹ The question that immediately arises is: If the use of le in (4.14e) can also be justified on semantic grounds, why, then, did the majority of the respondents not insert it at the end of the clause?

As an attempt to answer this question, we re-examined the stories in Huángliáng Mèng 'Golden Millet Dream,' from which the sample in (4.14) is excerpted. This time we focused on the concluding portion of each of the stories selected, specifically those in which the sentence-final le could potentially be used as a discourse-final marker but is somehow withheld. Interestingly, at the end of the thirty stories selected, there are only three instances in which le is used. One of these instances is clause (4.14e) above. This is the only instance where the "Double-LE" construction is used. The other two involve the use of the sentence-final le only, as in (4.25) and (4.26) below:

- (4.25) Cóngcǐ, Lǐhè zài Hányù de rèqíng
thereafter Lihe at Hanyu DE enthusiastic
bāngzhù xià hěn kuài de chéngzhǎng qǐlái le.
help LOC very fast DE grow-up up le

(Lǐhè Jiàn Hányù)

'Thereafter, under the enthusiastic guidance of Hanyu, Lihe made rapid progress.'

- (4.26) Yúshì, jiǎolóu jiù jiànzhào chūlái
 thus corner-pavillion then build out-come
le.
le

(Gùgōng Jiǎolóu)

'As a result, the corner pavillions were then built.'

It is worth noting that the sentence-final le again serves the dual function of "change of state" marker and discourse-final signal in both samples.

In the remaining twenty-seven stories, seven involve the use of the suffix -le in the concluding clause of the story. The other twenty do not involve the particle LE at all. The latter is essentially of two types, as shown in (4.27) and (4.28) below:

- (4.27) Zhèi duì liáojiě fójiao zài Zhōngguó de
 this toward understand Buddhism at China DE
 chuánbō hé fāzhǎn yǒu zhòngyào de
 propagate and development have important DE
 jiàzhí.
 value

(Báimǎ Sì)

'This (i.e. the preservation of the cultural and religious relics in the White Horse Temple) is extremely valuable for understanding the popularization and development of Buddhism in China.'

- (4.28) Xiéqùyuán shìfǒu zhēn yǒuqùwèi, nǐ
 Xiequyuan be-not really interesting you
 háishì qīnzì qù kànkàn, déchū zìjǐ de
 had-better self go look draw self DE
 jiélùn ba.
 conclusion PART

(Xiéqùyuán)

'Whether Xiequyuan is really interesting, you'd better go see (it) yourself and (then) draw your own conclusion.'

The sample in (2.27) is the concluding clause of a story about the White Horse Temple in China. It is a factual statement about the important contribution of the temple to the study of the popularization and development of Buddhism in China. The use of le at the end of the clause would force a "change of state" reading, i.e. it has now become extremely valuable for understanding the popularization and development of Buddhism in China. This reading, however, would be incompatible with the entire passage. Use of le in this sample is thus undesirable. This confirms our observation in Chapter III that factual statements in general do not take le, even as a discourse-final particle, specifically if the use of le results in an inappropriate "change of state" reading. In (4.28), the use of the sentence-final le is also undesirable. In this sample, the particle ba is used as a marker of suggestion,²² urging the reader to go visit Xiequyuan, one of Beijing's scenic spots, before making any judgments about whether it is really interesting or not. A sentence-final le is inappropriate here perhaps for the following reasons. First of all, with ba, (4.28) expresses a future expectation. As we saw in Chapter III, le is in general not used when the speaker/writer is expressing an expectation about a future event. Furthermore, since the sentence-/clause-final

position is already occupied by ba, which is also a sentence particle, the discourse-final use of le is impossible: the sequence of *ba le is not allowed in Mandarin.

Among the seven stories the concluding clause of which involves only the suffix -le, the following are the most representative:

- (4.29) Zhèi cùjìn-le shìjiè gè guó jīngjì
 this promote-le world each country economic
 hé wénhuà de fāzhǎn.
 and culture DE development

(Zhǐde Fāmíng)

'This (i.e. Chinese paper and paper-making methodology) has promoted the economic and cultural development world-wide.'

- (4.30) Wáng Yìróng lǎo Xiānsheng de zhè yì ǒurán
 Wang Yirong old Mr. DE this one by-chance
 de fāxiàn, hòulái zhōngyú zài dà guīmó
 DE discovery later-on finally at big scale
 wājué Hénán Ānyáng Yīnxū wénwù shí
 unearth Henan Anyang Yin-ruins relics when
 dédào-le zhèngshí.
 acquire-le proof

(Yíge ǒuránde Fāxiàn)

'This chance discovery by old Wang Yirong (of the oracle bones on which the Chinese characters of mid and late Shang Dynasty were written) was eventually proven by large scale excavation of the Yin ruins in Anyang County of the Hunan Province (in China).'

These two samples, as we just pointed out, occur at the end of the respective stories of which they are a part. However, the authors chose not to use the sentence-final le in both samples. Upon close examination, we find that both involve factual statements. That is, in (4.29), the fact is stated that the spread of Chinese paper and paper-making

methodology contributed significantly to the economic and cultural development world-wide. On the other hand, the fact stated in (4.30) is the confirmation of old Wang Yirong's chance discovery when a large-scale excavation of the Yin ruins was carried out in Henan Province. These two samples again show that in cases where factual statements are asserted, the sentence-final le is in general not used, even though these statements occur at the end of a discourse unit (in this case, the end of a story). The non-use of le in (4.31) below, excerpted from the concluding portion of a narrative in the Central Daily News, further supports this observation:

- (4.31) Línyuān wèi wǒmen tígòng-le yíge zuì
 Linyuan for we provide-le one-M most
 jùtǐ ér xiàncún de fànlì.
 concrete yet existing DE example

(Línyuān)

'Linyuan has provided us with the most concrete and live example.'

If we now return to clause (4.14e), we find that without the sentence-final le, the clause now is a simple factual statement. That is, it states merely the fact that more people are able to taste the delicious and splendid-appetizing Beijing Roast Duck. In other words, it is like samples (4.29)-(4.31) in that the "change of state" meaning denoted by le is no longer present. This perhaps explains why only a small percentage of the respondents (.15/.04) inserted the sentence-final le in (4.14e). That is, for

these respondents, the clause represents a factual statement, and, as a factual statement, the suffix -le, the realis marker, is thus needed to mark the clause as representing the peak event. The sentence-final le, on the other hand, is not absolutely necessary. Its insertion in the clause only adds a "change of state" reading to the otherwise plain statement of fact.

The above discussion on the low percentage of le in clause (4.14e) and (4.24g) clearly shows that perceptual differences exist among native speakers as to whether or not the sentence-final particle should be used at the end of a discourse unit. These differences can be the result of the context available in the minds of native speakers. For example, in (4.24g), we saw that, for the author, the sentence-final le was needed to wrap up the entire news report. However, for the respondents, who did not have the larger context to serve as a guide, the majority opted not to use it. The low percentage of le in (4.14e) is much more complicated. As we mentioned earlier, the presence vs. absence of a larger context can be appealed to in explaining the divergence between the author's and the respondents' use of le in this clause. Context, however, is not the sole determining factor. We saw that in cases where factual statements are involved, le is in general not used. It is possible, then, that the majority of the respondents were

treating (4.14e) as a factual statement and thus did not insert the sentence-final le at the end of the clause.

With the above observations in mind, let us now re-examine clause (4.7f), repeated below for the sake of convenience:

- (4.7) f. Wǒ tóu-shàng jǐng-shàng de hànzhū gèng
 I head-LOC neck-LOC DE sweat-drop more
 tóng shèngyǔ sì de yìkēyìkē
 like heavy-rain similar DE drop-after-drop
 de zuān .76/.13 chūlái le .05/.03.
 DE pierce out-come

'The beads of perspiration on my head and neck, much like a heavy rain, poured out in drops.'

We recall that in (4.7f), the author's use of the sentence-final le is to mark the end of the entire passage. It is worth noting that the passage, unlike the sample in (4.14), does not occur at the end of a story. In fact, following (4.7f), the author provides an explanation as to why he was wearing a heavy coat on that sunny spring afternoon:

- (4.32) Yīnwèi dāng wǒ zài shēnyè yóuxíng de
 because when I at deep-night stroll DE
 shíhòu tiānshàng bìng méiyǒu tàiyáng, érqiě
 time sky-LOC yet have-not sun also
 dǒuqiào de chūnhán, yú dōngfāng
 tremble-harsh DE spring-chill at east-side
 wéibái de cányè lǎo zài
 little-white DE remaining-night always at
 jìngjì de jiēxiàngzhōng liúzhè suǒyǐ wǒ
 quiet DE street-alley-LOC stay-ZHE so I
 chuān de nǎjiàn pǒ páozǐ hái juéde bù
 wear DE that-M worn-out coat still feel not
 shífēn yǔ jiéjì wéiyí . . .
 very with season differ

'Because when I was strolling late at night, the sun was still below the horizon. What's more, (when I did my nightly stroll) the harsh, shivering spring chill always haunted the

(deadly) quiet streets and alleys at early morning hours. Therefore, I did not feel very incongruous (with the season) when I had my worn-out coat on.'

It is apparent that the clauses in (4.32) serve to amplify and comment on the events of the main narrative. Furthermore, they are not in sequence to the foregrounded events expressed in sample (4.7). As such, they function as backgrounded events (cf. Hopper, 1979b:214-215). Seen in this way, the author's use of le in (4.7f) serves as an explicit marker between topical unit, separating the foregrounded events from the backgrounded events that follow.

Without this contextual information to serve as a guide, the majority of the respondents did not feel the need to use le to mark the boundary between topical units, as the author did. Instead, they felt that the use of the suffix -le, as a marker of the realis mode, is necessary, to mark the clause as representing a factual statement which at the same time occurs as a peak event. This again points to the important role context plays in determining whether or not le should be used as a discourse-final marker in a Chinese narrative.

4.3.1 The Follow-Up Survey

In the preceding section, we saw that the so-called "Double-LE" construction occurs rather infrequently in Chinese narrative discourse. There are only four instances

of this construction among the sixty-two samples (ca. 6%) we have collected. All these instances occur in clauses which represent either the concluding portion of a story (e.g. (4.20) and (4.23)) or the end of a discourse block (e.g. (4.21) and (4.22)). This strongly supports our analysis of le as a discourse-final particle. Not all discourse-final positions are marked by the use of le, though. For example, in samples (4.29) and (4.30), the authors did not use le, although these samples occur as the concluding portion of a story. We saw that, upon close examination, both samples involve factual statements about past events. The use of the suffix -le, the realis marker, is thus appropriate. On the other hand, the use of the sentence-final le in these samples would force an undesirable "change of state" reading and is therefore inappropriate. The non-use of le in samples (4.27) and (4.31) (though they do not involve the double-LE construction) further supports this observation. With respect to the sample in (4.28), we pointed out that the non-use of le is due perhaps to the presence of the particle ba, which expresses an expectation about a future event. Of course, the fact that the sentence-/clause-final position is already occupied by ba also renders impossible the discourse-final use of le.

Another factor which may affect the use of le in discourse is the context available in the minds of the speaker/writer. This is particularly significant with

respect to the discourse-final use of le, as suggested in our discussion of the low percentage at the end of clauses (4.7f) and (4.14e). To determine whether this observation is a valid one, we conducted a follow-up survey among six native speakers of Chinese who also participated in the survey mentioned above.²³ The follow-up was designed to test the use of le in expanded contexts and involved two types of test samples. In the first type, the subjects were asked to read through a whole story whereas in the second type, they were asked to read through only part of a story, before they decided whether the sentence-final le should be used in certain clauses pertinent to their reading.

Let us begin with the first type, in which each subject was asked to read through a whole story. Before the story was given to each subject, we purposely left out the concluding clause, so each story is, in this sense, "incomplete." The stories selected are those containing the samples in (4.20), (4.23), (4.27), (4.28), (4.29) and (4.30) as the concluding clauses. The samples in (4.20) and (4.23) were selected because they both involve the use of the double-LE construction at the end of the story. Furthermore, while the former has a monosyllabic verb followed by a relatively short constituent (i.e. dú-le hénduō shū 'read many books'), the latter has a bisyllabic verb followed by a comparatively long constituent (i.e.

chángdào-le wèi-xiāng-sè-měi de Běijīng Kǎoyā 'tasted the delicious and splendid-appetizing Beijing Roast Duck'). This would help us determine whether or not the formal criteria influence native speakers' use of the sentence-final le in discourse. With respect to the samples in (4.27), (4.29), and (4.30), where the authors did not use le, we thought these samples could be used to check our observation that le is not favored in clauses expressing a factual statement. Finally, the sample in (4.28) was selected to see how the subjects would react to sentences ending with the sentence particle ba and expressing a future expectation.

After the reading part was completed, each subject was then presented with the concluding clause of the story. If the author had used the sentence-final le in the concluding clause, it was omitted. For example, after the subject had read the story Běijīng Kǎoyā 'Beijing Roast Duck,' which has (4.23) as its conclusion, he was given (4.23'):

(4.23') Zhèi jiù shì gèngduō de rén chángdào-le sè-xiāng-wèi-měi de Běijīng Kǎoyā _____.

On the other hand, if the concluding clause does not involve the use of le, as in (4.27)-(4.30), then we simply provided a blank at the end of the clause. The subject's task was to fill in the blank with the sentence-final le, if he felt it was necessary, based on the story he had read. The results of this survey are summarized as follows:

- (4.20') Xiàng Huáng Shāngǔ zhèyàng de dà wénxué jiā,
shǐ, shū, huà sān jué de rén, bǐngbúshì
jīnshēng cái kāishǐ dúshū de, qiánshǐ yǐjīng
dù-le hēnduō shū 1.00/.00.
- (4.23') Zhèi jiù shǐ gèngduō de rén chángdào-le sè-
xiāng-wèi-měi de Běijīng Kǎoyā .83/.17.
- (4.27') Zhèi duì liáojiě fójiao zài Zhōngguó de
chuánbō hé fāzhǎn yǒu zhōngyào de jiàzhí
.00/.00.
- (4.28') Xiéqūyuán shǐfǒ zhēn yǒuquèwèi, nǐ hǎishì qīnzì
qù kǎnkǎn, déchū zìjǐ de jiélùn ba .00/.00.
- (4.29') Zhèi cùjìn-le shìjiè gè guó jīngjì hé wénhuà
de fāzhǎn .00/.00.
- (4.30') Wáng Yǐróng lǎo xiānsheng zhèi yì ǒurán de
faxiàn, hòulái zhōngyú zài dà guīmó wājiue
Hénán Ànyáng Yīnxū shǐ dédào-le zhèngshí
.33/.17.

The results show that on the whole the subjects agreed with the original author's use of the sentence-final le. The subjects unanimously regarded le obligatory in (4.20') and unanimously omitted it in (4.27')-(4.29'). With respect to (4.20'), which not only occurs at the end of a discourse unit but also involves a "change of state" meaning, all of the subjects inserted le, as the original author had. This confirms the observation in Chang (1982) that "at discourse-final positions where a "change of state" meaning is involved, le is most likely to be use" (p. 54). The unanimous omission of le in (4.27') and (4.29') lends strong support to our hypothesis that le is not favored in clauses which involve factual statements, even when they occur as the concluding clause of a story. In the case of (4.28'), where the subjects unanimously omitted le, we are not

certain whether the omission is due to the clause involving a future expectation or to the non-occurrence of the ungrammatical string *ba le, but the presence of ba as a marker of suggestion must have exerted great influence.

In (4.23'), five of the six subjects considered the sentence-final le obligatory and one thought it optional. It is interesting to note that among the five subjects who considered le obligatory, four had thought it unnecessary and one had thought it optional in the first survey. This shift in judgments very strongly supports our hypothesis that context plays an important role in the use of le as a discourse-final particle. Formerly, in the first survey, without the entire story as a guide, they did not consider the use of le obligatory. In the follow-up, however, they had to read through the whole story and with this serving as background information, they now decided that le is necessary to wrap up the entire story. The subject who thought le optional in the follow-up also considered it optional in the first survey. We do not have explanation for this except that the expanded context does not seem to have any effect on his use of le in the follow-up survey.

The subjects' use of le in (4.30') poses a problem to our observation that le is not favored in clauses involving factual statements. Among the six subjects, two thought le obligatory, one thought it optional, and the remaining three considered it unnecessary. This divergence among the

subjects seems to suggest that at least in some factual statements, the use of le is allowed. At first glance, it seems that the presence of zhōngyú 'finally' in (4.30') exerted some influence. That is, it serves as an explicit linguistic cue showing that the clause involves a "change of state" meaning: the chance discovery by Wang was finally confirmed at the time when a large-scale excavation of the Yin Dynasty ruins was conducted. This, however, is not entirely convincing. Observe, for example, the sample in (4.33), which also occurs at the end of a story:

- (4.33) Chǔ Wáng jǐcì xiǎng wǔrù Yànzi jiéguǒ
 Chu King many-times plan insult Yanzi finally
 què bānqǐ shítou dǎ-le zìjǐ de jiǎo.
 conversely take-up stone hit-le self DE foot
 (Yànzi)

'Several times, the King of Chu planned to insult Yanzi. However, in the end he took up a rock and hit his own foot (i.e. he ended up insulting himself).'

The author of (4.33) narrated several instances in which the King of Chu tried to insult Yanzi, before coming to this concluding clause. Note that the clause contains the phrase jiéguǒ 'finally, in the end,' and yet the author did not use the sentence-final le. This shows that the presence of zhōngyú 'finally' cannot be the determining factor for the three subjects' insertion of le in (4.30').

The sample in (4.33) in fact serves as a commentary clause, recapitulating the fact that the King of Chu was unable to outsmart Yanzi, however hard he tried. The main

verb in the clause dǎ 'hit' takes the suffix -le, as a realis marker, to recount a past event. However, the use of the sentence-final le is in general inappropriate. This is also frequently observed in spoken discourse. For example, (4.34) can be used as a reply to the question: Nǐ zěnmé huì xué Zhōngwén de? 'What motivated you to study Chinese?':

- (4.34) a. Wǒ juéde Zhōngguó wénhuà jīngshēn
I feel China culture extensive
yuānbó
profound
- b. hòulái yòu kàn-le hěnduō
later-on in-addition read-le many
yóuguān Zhōngguó de shū
regarding China DE book
- c. juéde yídìng yào liǎojiě Zhōngguó
feel must want understand China
- d. suǒyǐ jiù xuǎn-le Zhōngwén.
so then choose-le Chinese

'(At first) I thought Chinese culture is both extensive and profound. Then I read several books about China and felt the strong desire to understand China. So I took (the) Chinese (course).'

In (4.34), the speaker narrates a series of events ((a)-(c)) which led to his taking Chinese, as recapitulated in (d). The suffix -le is appropriate, but the sentence-final le cannot be used in (d), although the clause is the end of the reply. This shows that le in general does not occur in summary clauses that serve to comment on the main events in the text. The non-use of le at the end of (4.27') and (4.29') further supports this tendency. Specifically, the use of zhèi 'this' in these samples serves as an explicit

marker, signalling to the reader that what follows is a commentary summary clause. Take the sample in (4.29'), for instance. The main text narrates a series of events about how paper was invented in China and how this methodology was introduced first to Korea and Vietnam, then to Japan, to Middle East and Europe, and finally to other places in the world. The clause in (4.29') then sums up the story by saying that this (Chinese paper and paper-making methodology) promoted international economic and cultural development.

The foregoing discussion thus points to the fact that le is not favored in commentary or summary clauses at the end of a narrative. With this observation in mind, let us re-examine the subjects' use of le in (4.30'). The author narrates a series of events relating to the protagonist's chance discovery: Wang first purchased some medicine from a pharmacy, found some fragments of fossil bones in the medicine, consulted several of his books, examined and discussed the designs on the fragments with erudite scholars, and concluded that the designs on the fragments were in fact Chinese characters of mid and late Shang Dynasty inscribed on oracle bones. For the author, (4.30') represents the commentary/summary clause and therefore he did not use le at the end of the clause. The three subjects who did not insert le apparently agreed with the author, treating (4.30') as a commentary clause.

On the other hand, for the other three subjects who inserted le (two obligatory, one optional), it seems that they did not regard the clause as representing a commentary clause. Perhaps they treated the clause as part of the sequence of events narrated in the text and thus used le to mark the end of the entire story. This difference in the decoding of a text is not uncommon. In fact, the same sequence of events in a discourse segment can allow for different interpretations, with the use of le in different positions of the segment. For example, (4.35) below narrates three events:

- (4.35) a. Yùndòngchǎng cóngqián hěn nánkàn
athletic-field formerly very shabby
- b. kěshì xuéxiào huā-le wúshíwàn kuài
but school spend-le half-million M
qián xiūlǐ
dollars repair
- c. xiànzài hěn piàoliàng
now very pretty
- 'The athletic field used to look very shabby, but the university spent a half million dollars to repair it and now it looks pretty.'

If the sentence-final le is placed at the end of clause (c), the three events are treated as belonging to the same discourse unit. This is the usual interpretation of (4.35), as shown in the translation. Here le serves as a discourse-final particle, marking the end of the discourse unit. However, le can also be used at the end of clause (b), dividing the sample in (4.35) into two distinct units, with

clauses (a) and (b) as one, and clause (c) as the other. Clause (c) now serves as a commentary clause, asserting that the athletic field is now pretty as the result of the university's investment in expanding and remodeling the field. The translation would have the clause in (c) as a separate sentence: Now it looks pretty. In this interpretation, native speakers in general would not use another le at the end of the clause.

The fact that le is in general not favored in commentary summary clauses thus provides a natural explanation for its non-use in (4.27') and (4.29'). Furthermore, as (4.30') shows, native speakers may vary in their use of le at a discourse-final clause, depending on whether it is perceived as a commentary clause (thus the non-use of le) or as part of the main event line (hence the use of le to mark the end) of a story. This also explains why sometimes, as readers, we feel that le can be used at the end of a story but the author did not use it. Sample (4.36) below is a nice example:

- (4.36) a. Yījiǔwǔliù nián, gōng-sī-hé-yíng
 1956 year public-private-joint-work
 shí, zhèngfǔ zhǎodào Gǒubùlǐ de
 when government find Goubuli DE
 sūnzi Gāo Huànzhāng
 grandson Gao Huanzhang
 b. huīfù-le Gǒubùlǐ bāozi
 recover-le Goubuli steamed-stuffed-buns
 pu
 store

- c. cóngcǐ, Gǒubùlǐ bāozi
thereafter Goubuli steamed-stuffed-buns
yòu huòdé-le xīnshēng.
again regain-le new-life

(Gǒubùlǐ Bāozi)

'In 1956, when private enterprises were transformed into joint state-private ownership, the (local) government found Gao Huanzhang, the grandson of Goubuli, and helped to re-open the snack bar. Since then, Goubuli steamed stuffed buns have (had) a new lease of life.'

After xīnshēng 'new life' in clause (c), it is possible to insert le to mark the end of the story. However, the author did not use it, apparently treating the clause as a commentary about the entire story.

The fact that le in general is not favored in commentary clauses provides a more principled account for its non-occurrence in clauses involving future expectations, as in (4.24g) and (4.28'). These clauses are not part of the main event line of a narrative. They serve to comment and amplify on the main events but are not directly relevant to these events. This is why le generally is not favored in commentary clauses, whether they involve factual statements or future expectations. Of course, we also need to take into account perceptual differences among native speakers in order to better understand their use of le in discourse-final positions.

Next, let us discuss the second type of test samples in the follow-up survey. Only one sample was used in this type and it is sample (4.7) discussed above. There is one major

change, though. The sample in (4.32), which follows and serves to provide background information for the main events narrated in (4.7), was added so that the subjects would have more information than they originally had in the first survey. The task of the subject was to determine, given the expanded context, whether to use LE in the blanks in (4.7f'):

(4.7f') Wǒ tóu-shàng jǐng-shàng de hànzhū, gèng tóng
shèngyǔ sì de, yìkēyìkē de zuān ____ chūlái
_____.

The subjects' insertion of LE shows the following patterns:

(4.37) (P1) zuān Ø chūlái X (3 subjects)

(P2) zuān X chūlái Ø (2 subjects)

(P3) zuān X chūlái 0 (1 subject)

(where X=obligatory use, 0=optional use,
and Ø=non-use of LE)

Among the three patterns, (P1) is favored by half of the subjects. It is worth noting that the three subjects who chose to use (P1) used (P2) in the first survey. This shift in judgments shows that the expanded context must have exerted some influence. That is, the sentence-final le was used as a boundary marker, separating the main events (as in (4.7)) from the background events (as in (4.32)), as the author did. The two subjects who chose (P2) also used it in the first survey. The only subject who chose (P3) also used (P2) in the first survey. We have no explanation for his change in the use of le from completely unnecessary to

optional, except that it seems to agree with the tendency displayed by the first three subjects.

One fact that is clearly shown in (4.37) is that no subject preferred the so-called "Double-LE" construction. None of them inserted both an obligatory -le after zuān 'pierce' and an obligatory le after chūlái 'come out.' When asked why he did not insert LE in both blanks, the subject who used (P3) said that he would use LE in either one of the positions but not both. If we now compare (4.7f') and (4.20'), we find that the two are very similar in structure: both contain a monosyllabic verb followed by a relatively short constituent. Why, then, in (4.20') did the subjects unanimously insert le, thus forming a double-LE sentence, while not forming the same construction in (4.7f')? A closer examination of (4.7f') and (4.20') shows that in the former, the intervening constituent is a directional complement (i.e. chūlái 'come out'), whereas in the latter, it is a noun phrase (i.e. hěnduō shū 'a lot of books'). The response quoted above suggests that the subjects' reluctance to use the double-LE construction can be attributed to the presence of the directional complement in (4.7f'). Therefore, it is worthwhile to look into the use of the double-LE construction, if any, in clauses containing directional complements such as chūlái 'come out.'

4.3.2 The Particle LE in Clauses Containing Directional Complements

Directional complements here refer to the combination of what Lu (1973) labels as "secondary" and "primary" direction-motion verbs. "Secondary" direction-motion verbs include shàng '(go) up,' xià '(go) down,' jìn '(go) into,' chū '(go) out of,' guò '(go) across,' huí '(go) back to' and qǐ '(go) up to.' Each of these specifies a certain direction, but none of them is speaker-oriented. "Primary" direction-motion verbs include lái 'come' and qù 'go,' which differ from the ones in the "secondary" category in that they are speaker-oriented. Directional complements such as chūlái 'come out' and jìnqù 'go into' are thus referred to as "dual directional" constructions (Lu, 1977:291).

After examining the use of LE with directional complements in two popular Chinese Readers: Jīchǔ Hànyǔ Kèběn 'Elementary Chinese Readers' and Huángliáng Mèng 'Golden Millet Dream,' we found that of the forty-five stories included in the two readers, there are only a total of twenty-eight instances in which the particle LE is used with directional complements. What is more, none of these instances involves the use of the so-called "Double-LE" construction. Among the twenty-eight instances, fifteen involve the use of the verbal suffix -le, as in lā-le xiàlái 'pulled (x) down.' The other thirteen instances involve only the use of the sentence-final le, e.g. jiē guòlái le 'received (x) from (y).' It is worth noting that among the

fifteen instances in which only the suffix -le is used, the verb is invariably monosyllabic, as shown in (4.38) and (4.39):

- (4.38) Liú Wúlài fān-le ge shēn, hěn kuài de zuò-le
 Liu Wulai turn-le M body very fast DE sit-le
qīlái, zuǐ-lǐ lián shuō: "Hǎo jiǔ,
 up-come mouth-LOC repeatedly say good wine
 hǎo jiǔ."
 good wine

(Shé Jiǔ)

'Liu Wulai turned his body, quickly sat up, and exclaimed repeatedly: "Great wine! Great wine!"'

- (4.39) Yóuyìtiān, tā kànjiàn pángxiè de duìqǐ-xià yǒu
 one-day he see crab DE navel-LOC have
 yíshí fèngxì, jiù yìtóu zuān-le jìngǔ,
 one-M crack then one-head pierce-le into-go
 cóngcǐ zài yě chūbùlái le.
 thereafter again also unable-to-come-out le

(Shuǐ Mǎn Jīnshān)

'One day, (when he was searching for a place to hide) he saw a crack in a crab's belly, sneaked in and could not come out again.'

On the other hand, among the thirteen instances which involve only the sentence-final le, both monosyllabic and bisyllabic verbs are used as the main verb. There are eight instances with monosyllabic verbs (as in (4.41)) and five instances with bisyllabic verbs (as in (4.40)). These instances typically occur at the end of a discourse block, as shown in the samples below:

- (4.40) Yúshì jiǎolóu jiù jiànzhào chūlái
 therefore corner-pavillion then build out-
le.
 come le

(Gùōng Jiǎolóu)

'Therefore, the corner pavillions were built.'

- (4.41) a. Jiǔ-ér-jiǔ-zhī, Jiǔyuè jiǔrì dēnggāo
 gradually September nine-day climb-
 de fēngsù jiù xīng qǐlái le.
 high DE custom then prosper up-come le
- b. Jiǔyuè jiǔrì shì èr jiǔ xiāng
 September nine-day be two nine together
 chōng, suǒyǐ yòu jiào "Chóngyáng."
 overlap so also is-called double-nine

(Jiǔjiǔ Huà Chóngyáng)

'Gradually, it became a popular custom that on the ninth day of the ninth lunar month, people go "climb high" in the mountains. Because this is the ninth day of the ninth month, it is also called "Chongyang" (Double Ninth).'

The sample in (4.40) occurs at the end of a story about the corner pavillions of the Forbidden City in China. The use of le in this sample serves the function of wrapping up the entire story. The le in (4.41) separates the last clause of a series of foregrounded events (i.e. clause (a)) from the background commentary (i.e. clause (b)).²⁴ It can be seen as a boundary marker between discourse units. The use of le in these two samples again confirms our observation that le serves as a discourse-final particle in Chinese narrative.

The results of our textual study confirms the patterns of response reported in (4.37). That is, the so-called "Double-LE" construction is not favored in clauses containing directional complements. The next question is: Why? With respect to samples like (4.38) and (4.39), which involve only the suffix -le, the answer is not difficult to

find. Take sample (4.38), for instance. The three clauses in this sample form a unified discourse unit. This is further verified by the use of zero anaphor, which serves as a discourse-internal tie among the clauses. The use of le, as a discourse-final particle, after the directional complement qílái '(come) up' is inappropriate. It would break the discourse unit into two separate, distinct units and thus renders the sample "choppy." Therefore, the double-LE construction is not likely to be formed in (4.38). This explanation also applies to the sample in (4.39).

The samples in (4.40) and (4.41), on the other hand, are more difficult to account for. Specifically, in (4.40), where the verb preceding the directional complement is monosyllabic. Monosyllabic verbs, as we have seen, tend to occur with the suffix -le to recount past happenings. The author, however, did not use it. One possible explanation is that directional complements, unlike the noun phrases in (4.20) and (4.21), tend to be interpreted as holding a closer tie with the preceding verb. In other words, xīng qílái 'become popular' in (4.41) can be seen as forming a close-knit conceptual unit.²⁵ If we add to this an explanation from the discourse perspective, the non-occurrence of the suffix -le in this sample can perhaps be accounted for.

In (4.41), there are four possibilities for the particle LE to be combined with the directional complement:

(i) xīng-le qǐlái, (ii) xīng-le qǐlái le, (iii) xīng qǐlái le, and (iv) xīng qǐlái. Of these possibilities, the author chose (iii). His decision, however, is well-motivated on discourse grounds. That is, the le in (iii) separates clause (a), which is the last of a sequence of foregrounded events, from clause (b), which provides a background commentary information (i.e. why this day is called "Double Ninth Festival"). This is the use of le as a boundary marker between two discourse units of different nature. Such a boundary, however, would not have been marked at all, had the author chosen (i) or (iv). This leaves us with (ii) to account for. Professor Chu (personal communication) had suggested that perhaps the double-LE construction in (ii) is withheld to avoid the repetition of homophonic LE's at the level of phonology. This is indeed a correct observation and can perhaps explain why the construction is so surprisingly rare in Chinese narrative discourse. That is, since xīng qǐlái can be perceived as a close-knit unit and since the use of le after qǐlái is needed in terms of overall discourse structure, the use of the suffix -le after xīng is not appropriate. Furthermore, its non-use avoids the repetition of two homophonic LE's in the same clause. Therefore, a double-LE construction like (ii) was not chosen by the author.

The non-use of the construction in (4.40) can be similarly accounted for. Had the author chosen jiànào-le

chūlái, this concluding clause would be explicitly marked (by the suffix -le) as representing the peak event. However, the entire story would sound "incomplete." This is perhaps why the author chose to use jiànzào chūlái le, with the sentence-final le explicitly marking the end of the entire story. Furthermore, the phrase jiànzào chūlái forms a close-knit unit, as it stands. On the other hand, although jiànzào-le chūlái le is structurally possible, it is not favored due to the tendency to avoid homophonous LE's in the same clause.

The foregoing discussion strongly suggests that the incompatibility of the double-LE construction with directional complements involves the interaction between the following factors: (i) whether the verb-directional complement combination is perceived as forming a close-knit unit, (ii) whether the sentence-final le is needed on discourse grounds, and (iii) the avoidance of homophonous LE's in the same clause. The interplay between these factors explains the patterns of response in (4.37). First of all, the non-use of the double-LE construction is due to the avoidance of homophonous LE's in the same clause. The fact that three of the subjects shifted their judgments and selected (P1) in the follow-up survey can also be accounted for. In the first survey, they were given only the sample in (4.7). A natural response would be to use the suffix -le to mark the clause as representing a peak event. This use

of -le is further necessitated by the verb being monosyllabic, i.e. zuān 'pierce.' Furthermore, with the insertion of -le, the sentence-final le would not be used, to avoid the co-occurrence of two homophonous LE's in the same clause. Therefore, they chose (P2) in the first survey: zuān-le chūlái 'come pouring out.'

In the follow-up survey, with the sample in (4.32) serving as background information, they chose (P1), i.e. zuān chūlái le, as the author did. The reason is that the sentence-final le here separates the main (i.e. foregrounded) events ((4.7a)-(4.7f)) from the supporting, descriptive material that follows ((4.32)). Their shift in judgments, therefore, is well-motivated on discourse grounds. Furthermore, the verb zuān 'pierce' and the directional complement chūlái '(come) out' can be perceived as forming a close-knit unit.

For the other three subjects, who chose (P2) or (P3) in the follow-up survey, it is possible that the monosyllabic nature of the verb forced these subjects to insert the suffix -le. This is further reinforced by the avoidance of homophonous LE's in the same clause. This, then, is a case in which the monosyllabic nature of the verb outweighs the use of the sentence-final le as a boundary marker between discourse units. Another possibility is that perhaps the subjects do not see the need for a split between the clauses in (4.7) and (4.32). The use of pronominal anaphor (wǒ 'I')

in (4.32) shows that the two samples have the same thematic/topical participant and thus can be interpreted as belonging to the same discourse unit.²⁶ This, then, is another instance which shows that native speakers can vary in their interpretation as to whether or not a group of clauses should be treated as a discourse unit, and consequently vary in their encoding of the message.

4.3.3 The "Double LE" Construction: A Summary

In the preceding sections, we saw that the so-called "Double-LE" construction occurs rather infrequently in Chinese narrative discourse. The scarcity of this construction involves the interplay between several factors. In discourse-internal positions (e.g. clause (4.15b)), the construction is not likely to be formed, since le, as a discourse-final particle, is in general withheld until the end of a discourse block. At discourse-final positions, several factors affect the formation of this construction. Some factors are directly relevant to the sentence-final le. For example, we saw that although le is in general favored in clauses which involve a "change of state" meaning (e.g. (4.20)), it is generally not used in commentary clauses, whether they involve factual statements (e.g. (4.27') and (4.29')) or future expectations (e.g. (4.24g) and (4.28')). The presence of another sentence-final particle (e.g. ba in

(4.28)) also renders the discourse-final use of the particle le impossible.

Perceptual differences among native speakers also influence their use of le. The divergence in (4.30') shows that speakers may vary in judgments as to whether or not to treat a concluding clause as a background commentary (thus the non-use of le) or part of the main event line (hence the use of le). Furthermore, they may also differ regarding whether to treat a sequence of clauses (e.g. those in (4.7) and (4.32)) as belonging to the same discourse unit (thus the non-use of le) or representing discourse units of different types (thus the use of le to mark a split). Context also plays a significant role in determining whether le should be used as a discourse-final particle, as the subjects' shift in judgments in (4.23') and (4.7f') shows.

Other factors blocking the formation of the double-LE construction are more relevant to the suffix -le. For example, we saw that monosyllabic verbs tend to occur with the suffix to recount past happenings. The use of -le tends to rule out the sentence-final le, to avoid two homophonous LE's in the same clause. With directional complements, the avoidance of two homophonous LE's is achieved in a different way. Directional complements in general hold a close relation to the preceding verb, whether it is monosyllabic or bisyllabic. Together the verb and the complement can be perceived as forming a conceptually close-knit unit. In our

textual study, nearly half of the instances are of this type. This type may in fact be favored on discourse grounds, as shown in (4.40) and (4.41). The preference would rule out the suffix -le, again to avoid the co-occurrence of two homophonous LE's in the same clause. Of course, other factors such as context and perceptual differences among native speakers also come into play, as the three patterns of response in (4.37) indicate.

4.4 The Use of the Verbal Suffix -Le in Narrative Discourse

In our discussion of the survey results, we saw that there are many factors which influence native speakers' use of the particle LE in narrative discourse. In the preceding sections, we examined the factors affecting the use of the sentence-final le, specifically with respect to the so-called "Double-LE" construction. In this section, we will focus on -le, recapitulating the respondents' use of the suffix in the test samples and examining how the various factors interact in determining its use in narrative discourse. The main findings of the survey are presented in Tables 1 and 2 below. In each table, the percentage figures indicating the respondents' insertion of the suffix in certain clauses are presented. The authors' use of the suffix is represented by spelling it out, and the use of the capital LE shows that the instance is ambiguous between the suffix -le and the sentence-final le. Moreover, in each

table, clauses that attract the greatest percentage use of -le are presented first, followed, in descending order, by other clauses attracting smaller percentage use of the suffix. If two clauses have the same total percentage of insertion, the one whose percentage for obligatory use is greater is presented first.

4.4.1 The Use of the Suffix -Le in Peak Clauses of a Discourse Segment

Let us first examine Table 1, which shows the respondents' insertion of -le in peak clauses of a discourse segment:

Table 1: The Use of the Suffix -Le in Peak Clauses of a Discourse Segment

Clause	Monosyllabic	Clause	Bisyllabic
(4.1h)	<u>zai</u> <u>-le</u> .94/.05	(4.14a)	<u>zengshe</u> <u>-le</u> .60/.30
(4.4q)	<u>an</u> <u>-le</u> .79/.11	(4.14b)	<u>luocheng</u> <u>LE</u> .71/.16
(4.7f)	<u>zuan</u> .76/.13	(4.14e)	<u>changdao</u> <u>-le</u> .56/.28
(4.5f)	<u>zou</u> <u>LE</u> .85/.01	(4.4d)	<u>miman</u> <u>-le</u> .73/.09
(4.4t)	<u>qu</u> <u>LE</u> .79/.06	(4.1d)	<u>panshang</u> <u>-le</u> .64/.14
(4.5c)	<u>shuo</u> .03/.00	(4.7c)	<u>linchu</u> <u>-le</u> .54/.24
(4.4k)	<u>shuo</u> .00/.01	(4.7e)	<u>difu</u> <u>-le</u> .51/.02
		(4.5i)	<u>huidao</u> .04/.10

The percentage figures in Table 1 show that on the whole, the majority of the respondents agreed with the authors' use of the suffix in the samples we examined. The only exception is (4.7f), where the author did not use the suffix but the majority of the respondents (.76/.13) inserted it after zuān 'pierce.' Table 1 further shows that the suffix is rarely used with verbs of saying, even if the verb occurs

in the peak clause of a discourse segment, as the near unanimous omission in (4.5c) and (4.4k) indicates. The low percentage in (4.5i) shows that -le is in general not used in clauses containing the adverb cái '(then and only) then; not . . . until. . . .'

Table 1 further shows that if the main verb of the peak clause in a discourse segment is monosyllabic, it tends to attract a higher percentage use of -le. With clauses (4.5c) and (4.4k) excluded, an average of 90% of the respondents (83% obligatory and 7% optional) inserted -le after monosyllabic verbs in peak clauses. With bisyllabic verbs, the average is slightly lower: 79% of the respondents (61% obligatory and 18% optional) inserted the suffix in peak clauses of a discourse segment. The computation does not include the low percentage in clause (4.5i).

It is worth noting that although the overall percentage average is slightly lower (by 11%) with bisyllabic verbs than with monosyllabic verbs, the majority of the respondents (79%) still inserted the suffix -le if the verbs occurs in the peak clause of a discourse segment. This confirms our observation of the suffix as an explicit morphosyntactic marker in Mandarin for the culminating event in a segment of discourse. More importantly, it shows that Andreassen's (1981) and Li and Thompson's (1981) claim that -le is rendered unnecessary in the presence of the so-called "perfectivizing verbal complements" is not entirely correct.

On the bisyllabic column of Table 1, luòchéng 'complete,' chángdào 'taste,' pānshàng 'climb up,' línchū 'drip out,' and huídào 'return to' are verbal compounds composed of the main verb and a complement--a "perfectivizing verbal complement" in Andreasen's and Li and Thompson's terms. Yet a significant percentage of the respondents still used -le to mark the clause as the culminating event in the discourse segment of which it is a part.

Another significant finding revealed in Table 1 is that in clauses containing verbs with some classical flavor, the use of the suffix is significantly lower. This is shown in (4.7e), where only a little over half of the respondents (53%) inserted -le. This is 26% lower than the average (79%) for bisyllabic verbs in peak clauses. We recall that the verbal compound dīfú 'lower' consists of two near synonyms dī 'lower' and fú 'stoop' and carries with it some classical flavor. This explains the comparatively low percentage in (4.7e), although the clause represents the peak event in a discourse segment.

4.4.2 The Use of the Suffix -Le in Non-Peak Clauses of a Discourse Segment

Let us now examine Table 2, which summarizes the respondents' use of -le in non-peak clause:

Table 2: The Use of -le in Non-Peak Clauses of a Discourse Segment

Clause	Monosyllabic	Clause	Bisyllabic
(4.4l)	<u>tao</u> -le 1.00/.00*	(4.5a)	<u>chenmo</u> -le .88/.03*
(4.5d)	<u>jie</u> -le 1.00/.00*	(4.14d)	<u>chuandao</u> .35/.23
(4.4o)	<u>jie</u> -le .98/.00	(4.1a)	<u>juanqi</u> .41/.16*
(4.7b)	<u>zou</u> -le .89/.06	(4.5g)	<u>xiaoshi</u> -le .49/.04*
(4.5h)	<u>chou</u> -le .73/.10	(4.4s)	<u>chuxi</u> .29/.23
(4.7a)	<u>ling</u> -le .15/.19*	(4.1f)	<u>dengchu</u> .38/.08
(4.14c)	<u>piao</u> .04/.15	(4.5b)	<u>digei</u> .24/.18
(4.14c)	<u>guo</u> .04/.15	(4.4a)	<u>zuoqi</u> .24/.15*
(4.1g)	<u>ting</u> .09/.03	(4.4m)	<u>taochu</u> .20/.15
(4.7a)	<u>qu</u> .00/.00*	(4.4c)	<u>dianshang</u> .15/.15
(4.1e)	<u>han</u> .00/.00*	(4.1b)	<u>shiqi</u> .16/.13
		(4.1c)	<u>bizhu</u> .14/.15
		(4.4n)	<u>jiaogei</u> .10/.19
		(4.4p)	<u>zhuangru</u> .08/.19
		(4.4r)	<u>dianshang</u> .10/.16*
		(4.4j)	<u>shenshou</u> .06/.09
		(4.7d)	<u>yikan</u> .00/.00

* means "anterior" event in a discourse segment²⁷

Table 2 shows that, on the whole, the respondents were in agreement with the authors' use of -le in non-peak clauses. The only exceptions are clauses (4.7a) and (4.5g). In (4.5g), the author used -le but only a little over half of the respondents (53%) inserted the suffix in this clause. Furthermore, as we recall, the author used -le after ling 'receive' in (4.7a) to indicate that the event expressed by the clause occurred as an anterior event in the discourse segment which contains it. However, only a total of 34% of the respondents inserted -le in this position.

Let us examine Table 2 in greater detail, beginning with the left-hand column, which shows the respondents' use of -le with monosyllabic verbs in a non-peak clause. We

notice, first of all, the unanimous omission of the suffix after hǎn 'yell' in (4.1e). This is understandable, since the verb is in essence a verb of saying. This serves as strong evidence that the suffix -le is in general not used with verbs of saying, regardless of whether the verb occurs in a peak or non-peak clause of a discourse segment.

The unanimous omission of -le after qù 'go' in (4.7a), as we recall, is due to the fact that qù and the verb that immediately follows (i.e. lǐng 'receive,' also in (4.7a)) form a notional whole and thus disallows the use of the suffix. Next, we notice the low percentage of -le in (4.1g). As pointed out previously, the clause in fact serves as a background event, providing subsidiary information and amplifying on the peak event (i.e. (4.1h)) that follows. The low percentage after piāo 'float' and guò 'cross' in (4.14c) shows that in set phrases (e.g. piāo-yáng-guò-hǎi 'crossing the oceans and seas'), the use of the suffix is in general not favored. Functionally speaking, a set phrase is like a notional whole and thus disallows the insertion of -le.

The divergence between the author's use of -le after lǐng 'receive' in (4.7a), as a marker of anteriority, and the low percentage use by the respondents indicates that perceptual differences exist among native speakers as to whether -le should be used as an explicit morphosyntactic signal, marking the anterior event in a discourse segment,

or simply left out because its insertion into a constituent which is notionally an integral whole is not desirable.

With the above cases excluded, the average percentage use of -le in non-peak clauses with monosyllabic verbs is 95% (92% obligatory and 3% optional), even slightly higher (by 5%) than in peak clauses. This strongly suggests that the suffix is in general used with monosyllabic verbs, whether the verb occurs in a peak or a non-peak clause of a discourse segment. This is understandable, since monosyllabic verbs in Mandarin take the realis marker -le to recount what (has) happened. Furthermore, a comparison of the respondents' use of -le in anterior-event clauses (4.41) and (4.5d), where the suffix was unanimously inserted, and their use of the suffix in clauses (4.4o), (4.7b), and (4.5h), non-anterior-event clauses with the average percentage of insertion as 92% (87% obligatory and 5% optional), seems to suggest that the suffix is most likely to be used with monosyllabic verbs in clauses occurring as anterior events in a discourse segment. However, the fact that there is only an 8% difference between the two shows that perhaps the anterior vs. non-anterior event as a condition for -le with monosyllabic verbs is not very significant.

Let us now turn to the right-hand column of Table 2, which shows the respondents' insertion of -le in non-peak clauses with bisyllabic verbs. As the percentage figures

indicate, in non-peak clauses of a discourse segment, the use of the suffix is significantly lower than in peak clauses when the main verb in the clause is bisyllabic. With bisyllabic verbs, the average percentage is 41% (27% obligatory and 14% optional) in non-peak clauses.²⁸ This is 38% lower than when it occurs with bisyllabic verbs in peak clauses. The clause that attracts the highest percentage use of -le is (4.5a), where a total of 91% of the respondents inserted the suffix. The reason for this high percentage, as we recall, has to do with the main verb chénmò 'silent,' a stative verb used to denote a dynamic event by the use of the suffix -le. The fact that the author as well as the majority of the respondents used -le in this position strongly suggests that stative verbs tend to be suffixed with -le, the realis marker, to recount past happenings (and thus allows the use of "cognate objects" that follow).

The clause that attracts the second highest percentage use of -le is (4.14d), followed by clauses (4.1a), (4.5g) and (4.4s). In these clauses, a little over half of the respondents inserted the suffix: 58%, 57%, 53%, and 52%, respectively. The fact that clauses (4.1a) and (4.5g), both representing anterior events in a series, attract a considerable percentage insertion of -le seems to suggest that the suffix is favored with bisyllabic verbs in clauses occurring as the anterior event of a discourse segment. In

fact, if we compute the average percentage of -le in clauses (4.5a), (4.1a), (4.5g), (4.4a) and (4.4r)--all representing the anterior event in a discourse segment--we have an average of 53% (42% obligatory and 11% optional) insertion of the suffix. This is 12% higher than the average (41%) for bisyllabic verbs in non-peak clauses. Furthermore, it is also higher by 17% than the insertion of -le in other clauses on the right-hand column, which have an average of 36% insertion (20% obligatory and 16% optional) of the suffix. There are, however, two points that need to be noted here. First, the high percentage (.88/.03) after chénmò 'silent' in (4.5a) definitely has a great impact on our computation of the overall average. Stative verbs in Mandarin cannot be used to denote a dynamic event/process except through the use of the realis marker -le. The high percentage is thus expected. However, it is not certain whether the high percentage is due to the verb being a stative one or due to the clause being the anterior event. Secondly, we notice that in (4.4a) and (4.4r), the percentage of insertion is relatively low: 39% and 26%, respectively. The latter is particularly striking and suggests that the high percentage in (4.5a) is perhaps due to the necessary use of -le to convert a stative verb into a dynamic event/process verb.

In other clauses on the right-hand column, the percentage figures are all relatively low, ranging from 46%

in (4.1f) to the unanimous omission in (4.7d). This again shows that in non-peak clauses, native speakers' use of the suffix admits a certain degree of latitude. Particularly interesting among these clauses are the ones in which the main verb is followed by the so-called "perfectivizing verbal complement." In clauses (4.1a), (4.4a), and (4.1b), we find the same complement qǐ 'up,' yet the percentage of insertion varies: 57%, 39%, and 29%, respectively. Clause (4.1a), as we recall, represents the anterior event in a discourse segment. So does the clause in (4.4a). The percentage of insertion in these clauses is comparatively higher than that in (4.1b). This seems to support our observation above that bisyllabic verbs in clauses occurring as the anterior event tend to attract a higher percentage use of -le. However, the respondents' unwillingness for insertion of the suffix after the verbal compound diǎnshàng 'light up' in (4.4r) seems to indicate otherwise. The verbal compound occurs twice in the same sample: once in (4.4c), where 30% of the respondents inserted -le, and the other in (4.4r), where the suffix was inserted by 26% of the respondents. However, the latter, which has a slightly lower percentage, represents the anterior event in a discourse segment. This again shows that with bisyllabic verbs, although the anterior event of a discourse segment tends to attract higher percentage use of -le, this tendency is not strictly observed.

One factor that may have affected the respondents' use of -le in non-peak clauses is seen in clause (4.4p), which contains the verbal compound zhuāngrù 'put into.' The complement ru 'into' is highly classical-flavored and the verbal compound is in general replaceable in contemporary Chinese by its more colloquial equivalents: zhuāngjìn or fàngjìn. This explains the relatively low percentage (27%) of insertion, specifically the fact that only 8% of the respondents considered the suffix obligatory in this clause. It seems that the low percentage after shíqǐ 'pick up' in (4.1b), discussed above, can in part be explained on the same grounds. The verbal compound also carries with it some classical (perhaps, only some non-colloquial) flavor and is replaceable by jiǎnqǐ or náqǐ, with shí replaced by its colloquial equivalents jiǎn and ná.

The verbal compound xiāoshì 'disappear' in (4.5g), as we recall, is made up of two near synonyms: xiāo 'to extinguish, to disappear' and shì 'to be gone, to vanish.' Furthermore, this compound also carries with it some classical flavor. However, the percentage figures show that a little over half of the respondents (53%) inserted -le in this clause. This seems to constitute a counter-example to our observation that -le is in general not favored with expressions carrying some classical flavor. Two points are worth noting here, however. First, the clause also represents the anterior event in a discourse segment, and as

we saw earlier, anterior-event clauses tend to attract a higher percentage use of the suffix. Second, and more importantly, we recall that this verbal compound is in fact indeterminate in terms of its status and usage. The latter may be the main reason why the respondents are almost evenly divided (53% vs. 47%) in their insertion of the suffix. The respondents' insertion of -le in this clause further suggests that the use of the suffix involves several factors, which interact to determine its use in a narrative discourse.

Let us now examine clauses (4.1f) and (4.4m). These two clauses are similar in that the verbal compound in each clause contains the complement chū 'out.' However, the respondents' insertion in these two clauses vary: 46% in (4.1f) and 35% in (4.4m). At first glance, it seems that the lower percentage in (4.4m) is perhaps due to the presence of the verbal compound tāochū 'take out,' which has some classical flavor and is replaceable by náchū, its more colloquial counterpart. This may not be entirely true, though, since only three out of the six subjects we informally surveyed considered tāochū 'take out' with some classical flavor. The other three thought the compound equally colloquial as it stands. This suggests that there may be other factors involved in the relatively low percentage in (4.4m).

If we examine more closely the context in which clause (4.4m) occurs, we notice that the clause which immediately precedes it, i.e. (4.4l), repeated below for the sake of discussion, contains the verb tāo 'grope':

- (4.4) 1. Huá Dāmā zài zhěntou dǐxià, tāo-le
 Hua Dama at pillow underneath grope
1.00/.00 bàn tiān
 half day

'Hua Dama groped underneath the pillow for a long time.'

Recall that in Chapter III we pointed out that in cases where the verbs exhibit lexical cohesion: repetition, collocation, and synonymy, the suffix -le is in general withheld. It is thus possible that the relatively low percentage of -le in (4.4m) is due to the verb tāo 'grope' being repeated in two adjacent clauses. Collocation, as a cohesive device, can be appealed to in explaining the low percentage of insertion in (4.4n). This clause is similar to (4.5b) in that the verbal compounds in both clauses (i.e. jiāogěi 'give to' and dìgěi 'hand to,' respectively) contain the same complement gěi 'to.' However, whereas 42% of the respondents inserted -le in (4.5b), only 29% of them did so in (4.4n). The reason for this comparatively low percentage in (4.4n) is due perhaps to the presence of the verb jiē 'receive' in the immediately following clause (4.4o), repeated below for easy reference:

- (4.4) o. Lǎoshuān jiē-le .98/.00 (yángqián).
 Laoshuan receive (yangqian)

'Laoshuan received (the silver money).'

The verbal compound jiāogěi 'give to' and the verb jiē 'receive' are cohesive in the sense that there is a strong collocational tie between the two. This offers a more natural explanation for the relatively low percentage in (4.4n). The high percentage in (4.4o), on the other hand, is expected since the verb jiē is monosyllabic.

4.4.3 The Use of the Suffix -le in Narrative Discourse: A Summary

In our discussion of the suffix -le in the preceding two sections, we saw that in peak clauses of a discourse segment, -le is most likely to be used with monosyllabic verbs. With bisyllabic verbs, although the respondents' use dropped slightly, it is nevertheless used to mark the clause as the culminating event of a discourse segment. On the other hand, -le is in general not used with verbs of saying and in clauses containing the adverb cái, nor is it favored with expressions carrying some classical flavor.

In non-peak clauses of a discourse segment, the suffix -le in general is not used with verbs of saying, in set phrases, or in constituents which are notionally an integral whole. We also saw that the suffix does not occur with verbs in those clauses which represent background events in a narrative. Furthermore, with expressions containing some classical flavor, the suffix is generally not favored. Another case in which -le is withheld is when the verb is lexically cohesive with another in an adjacent clause. On

the other hand, the suffix is most likely to be used with monosyllabic verbs, specifically when these verbs occur in clauses which represent the anterior event in a discourse segment. With bisyllabic verbs, the use of the suffix involves the interaction of many factors. We saw that, on the whole, the average percentage of insertion is 41% (27% obligatory and 14% optional). The clause that attracts the highest percentage of insertion is (4.5a), which contains a stative verb followed by a cognate object and occurs as the anterior event in a discourse segment. Furthermore, we saw that bisyllabic verbs in anterior-event clauses seem to attract a higher percentage of -le. But this does not hold in every case.

Thirteen of the total of seventeen bisyllabic verbs in Table 2 contain what Andreassen (1981) and Li and Thompson (1981) refer to as the "perfectivizing verbal complements." However, the respondents' use of the suffix -le in these instances varies drastically, ranging from 58% in (4.14d) to only 26% in (4.4r). We have tried to account for the respondents' insertion in ten of the thirteen instances, examining whether the clause is the anterior event, whether the verbal compound carries some classical flavor and whether the verbal compound exhibits lexical cohesion with some other verbs in adjacent clauses. Still, we are unable to account for the relatively high percentage in (4.14d) and

(4.4s), on the one hand, and the low percentage in (4.1c), on the other.

What this shows is perhaps that native speakers' use of -le in non-peak clauses does allow a certain degree of latitude. This is particularly true with clauses containing bisyllabic verbs. It seems that this is the area where a network of different factors influencing the use of -le come into play. We have pointed out some of these factors in the preceding paragraphs. Another factor is the perceptual differences which exist between native speakers. For example, we saw in (4.7a) that the author used -le to mark explicitly the clause as representing the anterior event in a discourse segment. However, the majority of the respondents chose to withhold it, for fear that the insertion may break up an otherwise integral notional whole. The fact that the subjects' judgments were evenly divided about whether the verbal compound tāochū 'take out' contains some classical flavor further shows the existence of perceptual differences among native speakers of Chinese. A particularly nice example of this is seen in (4.5g), where the author used -le after xiāoshì 'disappear,' but only a little over half of the respondents (53%) inserted it. The verbal compound contains some classical flavor, and as such, the use of -le is in general not favored. One reason for the relatively high percentage in the clause is that the respondents differ with respect to their judgments on

whether the verbal compound is classical-flavored. Of course, the fact that the respondents are almost evenly divided in their insertion may also be attributed to the indeterminate status and usage of the verbal compound.

The use of -le in non-peak clauses, specifically when these clauses contain bisyllabic verbs of various sorts, thus allows for certain degrees of freedom, depending on the interplay of the various factors that are involved. Andreasen's (1981) and Li and Thompson's (1981) claim that the suffix is rendered unnecessary in the presence of "perfectivizing verbal complements" is, therefore, only partially right. They observed some factors which tend to rule out the use of the suffix but failed to investigate the interplay between these and some other factors. The factors which affect the use of -le in discourse are summarized in Table 3 below, where "+" means 'strongly favored,' "-" means 'unfavored,' "?" means 'indeterminate,' and "*" means 'cannot judge'--because they are not shown in the samples we examined:

Table 3: Factors Influencing the Use of -Le in Discourse

	Peak	Non-Peak
Monosyllabic	+	+
Bisyllabic	+	?
Anteriority	N/A	?
Verbs of Saying	-	-
<u>Cái</u>	-	*
Classical Flavor	?	-/?
Set Phrases	*	-
Notional Whole	*	-
Lexical Cohesion	*	-
Stative Verbs	*	+

4.5 The Particle LE in Narrative Discourse: A Preliminary Generalization

Table 3 above is a summary of our findings regarding the use of the suffix -le in Chinese narrative discourse. The next step is a preliminary generalization of these functions and a combination with our findings about the sentence-final le. First, some of the categories in Table 3 can be collapsed (e.g. the "realis" function with its opposite cai, etc.). Second, certain overlapping and complementary functions of -le and le can be combined. These result in the classification in Table 4.

Table 4: The Use of the Particle LE in Narrative Discourse

	Suffix <u>-le</u>	Sentence-final <u>le</u>
Discourse Function	Mark peak event	Mark end of discourse
Semantic Exception	-	Inferential comment ²⁹
Formal Exception	-	Verb <u>-le le</u>
Temporal/ Aspectual Functions	Realis marker for . Change of state action verbs (esp. . monosyllables) Sequence of events . (anteriority) .	
Semantic Exception	Expressions of classical flavor	

Note that this is merely a preliminary classification and combination of discourse and non-discourse functions. Many potential improvements are possible. Consider, for example, the temporal/aspectual functions. These categories are kept separate because they are classified separately in Li and Thompson (1981). However, it is not clear that they represent different functions. Professor Sullivan (personal communication) has pointed out to me that the perfective aspect, sometimes in combination with certain tense markers, performs all three functions in Russian and Polish. Whether Li and Thompson are correct or whether the Chinese situation is closer to that of Slavic should be cleared up by Lillian Huang, who is currently working on this topic. If the latter situation holds, then all three can be collapsed into a single functional element. Moreover, the fact the le is in general not favored with factual statements serving as discourse-final commentary is already accounted for, as a factual statement by itself implies no necessary action, is not sequentially ordered with regard to other events, and does not include a change of state. Similarly, the prohibition on verb -le le sequences can be included in a general description of clause syntax. All these generalizations must await the results of future research, but the potential for an improved and highly structured description certainly exists.

4.5 Notes

1. Among the eighty subjects, forty are college graduates from Taiwan and are currently studying or living in Gainesville. The other forty are freshmen at National Taiwan Normal University, in Taipei, Taiwan. The first group averages thirty years of age whereas the second, twenty years of age. Furthermore, among the subjects, twenty-seven are male and fifty-three are female. The results of the survey, however, do not show significant differences with respect to age or sex.
2. This sample is in fact sample (2.72), discussed in Section 2.5 of Chapter II. It was constructed by Spanos to test the frequency of use of LE in an established past tense context as well as its frequency of use with resultative compounds. As we pointed out previously, the sample was included in our survey to see if the same results could be obtained.
3. Another piece of supporting evidence for our division of the passage is the author's use of the nominal form nèi zhànshì '(that) soldier in clause (e):
 - (a) Yípáng, zǎo yǒu yí-ge zhànshì, juǎnqǐ xiùzi
 - (b) Ø cóng lǎo bānzhǎng shēnpáng shíqǐ shǒujù
 - (c) Ø bǐzhū yìkǒu dàqì
 - (d) Ø xiàng lǎo bānzhǎng yíyàng, Ø shùnzhe huǒlù, sōu-sōu-sōu Ø yòu pānshàng-le lièhuǒ fēiténg de mǔpáijiā
 - (e) bùyìhuǒ nèi zhànshì. . .
 In (a), the main participant is introduced in the nominal form: yíge zhànshì 'a soldier.' Subsequently, the zero form is used in clauses (b)-(d). As Li (1985:171) points out, "zero anaphora serves as a strong tie which unites elements in discourse to form an inseparable unit." The clauses in (a)-(d) thus form a discourse segment. The use of the nominal form in (e) then serves as an overt syntactic signal for the beginning of a new discourse segment.
4. Tsang (1978), quoted in Andreasen (1981:51) treats -zhe as the marker of the "non-progressive imperfective" aspect, the function of which is to signal the relative simultaneity of two situations.
5. In this sense, it is similar to those supportive events in a narrative which Hopper (1979a:45) labels as "off-stage," i.e. non-kinetic events designated as representing background information and relegated to the status of a "side-show."

6. See Section 2.7 of Chapter II.
7. See also Andreasen (1981:47), who treats yímiàn as a marker of the imperfective aspect, indicating "simultaneous progress of one or more verbal actions."
8. The use of the suffix -le with monosyllabic verbs in peak and non-peak clauses will be further examined in Section 4.4 below.
9. Bǎ is traditionally treated as a "disposal" marker in Mandarin. In general it serves to introduce the direct object of a verb (DeFrancis, 1963:267). Chu (1983:215) states that "the bǎ-sentence serves to tell what an agent does/has done to someone/something (technically, a patient)."
10. In contemporary Chinese, these are replaced either by a more colloquial form (e.g. jiāo 'teach' for chuánshòu) or simply retain the first verb of the compound (e.g. pài 'send' for pàiqián and dī 'lower' for dīfǔ). It is worth noting that the colloquial forms are usually monosyllabic and require the use of -le, the realis marker, to recount past happenings. The respondents' use of -le with the classical flavored verbal compound dīfǔ is examined below in sample (4.7).
11. The following are the textbooks (i) and grammars (ii) we consulted: (i) DeFrancis (1963, 1964), Fenn and Tewksbury (1967), Chang (1966), Chao (1966); (ii) Wang (1943), Chao (1968), Lin (1981), and Li and Thompson (1981). We also examined ten dictionaries but no description of the verbal compound is given.
12. The sample in (4.5) can be divided into three discourse segments, each maintaining a uniform orientation: (i) clauses (a)-(c); (ii) clauses (d)-(f); and (iii) clauses (g)-(h). This division is further supported by the author's use of zero anaphor, as shown below:
 - (a) Hēizǐ de niáng₁. . .
 - (b) Ø₁ bā. . .
 - (c) Ø₁ yòu. . .
 - (d) Shízhuàng₂ jiē. . .
 - (e) Ø₂ mǎozhe. . .
 - (f) Ø₂ dàbùdì. . .
 - (g) Hēizǐ de niáng₁. . .
 - (h) Ø₁ chāng. . .
 - (i) Ø₁ cái. . .
13. See test sample (6) in the Appendix.
14. This is excerpted from test sample (8).

15. Andreasen (1981) also notes that in a sentence like:
 Tā lái bāng wǒ.
 he come help I
 'He came/has come to help me.'
 the use of -le after lái is inappropriate. His explanation is that although the sentence contains two verb phrases, i.e. lái 'come' and bāng wǒ 'help me,' the sentence in fact expresses "a single unified event, not two separate events" (p. 54).
16. Another possibility is that the size of the constituent between the two LE's may have exerted some influence. That is, in the case of (4.7e), the directional complement chūlái is only two-character long. Thus, if the verbal suffix -le is used, then the sentence-final le is likely to be left out and vice versa. This possibility will be further explored in Section 4.3 below.
17. Note that the change in spatial setting, i.e. from West Changan Boulevard and Wangfujing Street to Hepingmen Street, may also be significant. See Longacre and Levinsohn (1977) for a more detailed discussion of spatial change and the marking of discourse units.
18. See test sample (7) in the Appendix.
19. The causative markers in Mandarin form a small set. Li and Thompson (1981:602) list just three: shǐ, jiào, and ràng. Causative markers, however, attract little attention from grammarians and linguists working on the language.
20. See Section 3.4.3 for a more detailed discussion of the non-use of le in clauses expressing a future expectation.
21. By contrast, the author's use of le at the end of (4.24g) can only be accounted for on discourse grounds. That is, its sole function in this instance is to mark the clause as the end of the entire report.
22. Most textbooks treat the sentence particle ba either as an exclamatory word or a question marker. However, as Chu (1983:105) points out, the particle is better analyzed as a marker of suggestion.
23. Due to the length of the stories (each averaging 2,000 running characters), we had to limit the number of subjects in the follow-up survey.
24. Note that the use of the sentence-final le at the end of clause (b) is again inappropriate.

25. The fact that directional complements tend to form an integral whole with the preceding verb is also observed by Lu (1977:276-77). In particular, he notes that in certain verb + directional complement constructions, the verb has a built-in direction. For example, whereas the phrase (X) jiàng xiàlái '(X) descend-down-come, i.e. (X) descend' is acceptable, the phrase *(X) jiàng shàngqù '(X) descend-up-go' is not, since "an object or a person cannot descend without going down."
26. For a more thorough discussion of the use of pronominal anaphor as a discourse-internal tie, see Li (1985:162-170).
27. For lack of a better term, the first event in a discourse segment is here designated as the "anterior" event of that segment. The use of -le in such segments is the "anteriority" -le discussed in Chapter III.
28. This does not include the unanimous omission of -le after yíkan 'one look' in (4,7d), which is in fact a nominal abbreviated from the verb phrase kàn yíkan 'take a look.'
29. This includes factual statements and future expectations, depending on the time reference.

CHAPTER V CONCLUSION

A careful study of the use of the particle LE in Chinese narrative discourse shows the interaction of several factors, linguistic and non-linguistic. The suffix -le is used as an explicit morphosyntactic marker for the peak event in a discourse segment. This provides a natural explanation for its incompatibility with the concomitative aspect marker -zhe, which typically occurs in clauses representing background events in a narrative. It also explains why the presence of -le in clauses containing the so-called "perfectivizing verbal complements" is not rendered unnecessary, if the clause represents a culminating event. The suffix -le tends to occur with monosyllabic verbs, regardless of whether the verb appears in the peak or non-peak clause of a discourse segment. This tendency illustrates the use of -le as a "realis" marker, to recount past happenings. The non-occurrence of -le in clauses containing the adverb cai is thus expected, since the latter is in essence a marker of the irrealis mode in Mandarin Chinese. Furthermore, -le also tends to be suffixed to the main verb in clauses representing the anterior event in the story line. This is particularly true if the verb is

monosyllabic. With bisyllabic verbs, however, this tendency is not universally observed, since most of these verbs contain some type of complements. Other factors which tend to affect native speakers' use of -le include: (i) whether the clause contains expressions with some classical flavor, (ii) whether the constituent is treated as a notionally integral whole, and (iii) whether the verbs in adjacent clauses exhibit lexical cohesion. Furthermore, context and the perceptual differences among native speakers also have a great impact on their use of the suffix.

The sentence particle le has traditionally been treated as a "change of state" marker. This is essentially a sentential notion. In terms of discourse, le in fact serves as a discourse-final particle, marking the end of a discourse unit. This provides a principled account as to why native speakers, as a rule, withhold the use of le in discourse-internal clauses, even though the clauses involve a "change of state" reading. It also explains the general tendency we observed that le is not favored in the presence of connectives and in constructions involving syntactic and semantic parallelisms, both of which serve as discourse-internal ties in narrative discourse. Furthermore, since a discourse unit is, in essence, a relative term, le is also used as a boundary marker between topical units. On the whole, we have seen that le is most likely to be used at discourse-final positions where a "change of state" meaning

is also involved. If the discourse-final clause serves as a commentary (regardless of whether the clause involves a factual statement or expresses a future expectation), then le is in general not used. Moreover, in clauses containing expressions of classical flavor, le generally is not favored. The use of le in narrative discourse is further conditioned by context and the perceptual differences among native speakers, as the results of the follow-up survey indicate.

With respect to the so-called "Double-LE" construction, we saw that it is rarely used in the narrative samples we examined. The scarcity is in fact the result of the intricate interplay among the various conditioning factors. These factors include at least the following: (i) whether the verb is monosyllabic, (ii) whether the clause already contains a sentence-final particle (e.g. ba), (iii) whether the clause serves as a commentary, (iv) whether the clause involves directional complements, (v) avoidance of homophonous LE's in the same clause, (vi) context, and (vii) perceptual differences among native speakers. Many of these factors may interact and compete with each other, resulting in a wide range of individual variation, as shown in the diverging patterns of response in (4.13) and (4.17).

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The results of the surveys on LE show that there are certain sets of principles which govern native speakers' use of the particle in Chinese narrative discourse. The results further show that the use of LE involves the interaction among several factors, linguistic and non-linguistic. Two useful tools that one can turn to, to account for the facts we observed are Integrative Linguistics and Conceptual Dynamism.

5.1.1 Systems Interactions¹

The interplay among the various conditioning factors on the use of LE can be better captured in the framework of Integrative Linguistics, as proposed by Casagrande (1984a and 1984b). Integrative Linguistics (IL) focuses on systems which are components of language. IL does not impose specific formalism on the description of language. It enables the analyst to describe linguistic facts rather than merely speculate on an abstract model. In Integrative Linguistics, all phenomena related to language are studied. Linguistics is seen as a locus where different areas/disciplines come into contact--i.e. a network of interrelations.

In the perspective of IL, language is composed of independent but interacting systems, each with its elements controlled by a single regularity. The elements of a

linguistic \$ystem can be linguistic in nature, in consequence, or both. An element which is linguistic "in nature" can be an observable utterance, a linguistic structure, a lexical item, or any linguistic category or function. For example, reference, subject-verb agreement, the notion of command, nasal assimilation are "in nature." An element which is linguistically neutral--i.e., serves a function other than a linguistic one, is by definition, linguistic "in consequence." Speech organs, perception, time, personality, sex, etc., for instance, are linguistic "in consequence." Regularity, which is a manifestation of human's intrinsic need for order, is identified within each \$ystem. In IL, there is no irregularity, only conflicting, collaborating or indifferent regularities. From this, the following types of \$ystems interactions can be identified: \$ystems in conflict, \$ystems in collusion, and \$ystems in indifference. In what follows, we will examine the use of the particle LE in narrative discourse in terms of the first two primary types: \$ystems in conflict and \$ystems in collusion.

If each of the factors which condition the use of LE in narrative discourse is treated as an independent \$ystem, then the interaction among these factors can be seen as \$ystems competing or collaborating with each other, forming an intricate network of interrelations. For example, we saw several instances where the use of the sentence-final le is

withheld in discourse-internal clauses, although each of these clauses involves a "change of state" meaning (e.g. clauses (4.15b) and (4.15c)). The "Change of State \$system" which governs the use of le is in conflict with the "Discourse Final \$system" which calls for the use of le discourse finally but not discourse medially. Here the latter has primacy over the former.

A case of \$systems in collusion is shown in the use of the suffix -le after zāi 'fall' in clause (4.1h). The clause represents the peak event of a discourse segment, so the use of -le is well-motivated on discourse grounds. This is further reinforced by the requirement of -le with monosyllabic verbs. Here the discourse function of -le (a "Discourse" \$system) collaborates with the monosyllabicity of the verb (a \$system of phonological nature),² resulting in the high percentage use (99%) of the suffix.

Let us now examine a more complicated case of \$systems interaction. In our study of narrative discourse samples, we did not find a single instance of the "Double-LE" construction where the clause contains a directional complement. This is in fact the result of several \$systems interacting and competing with each other. Take, for instance, the respondents' insertion of LE in clause (4.7f), repeated below for the sake of convenience:

- (4.7) f. wǒ tóu-shàng jǐng-shàng de hànzhū, gèng
 I head-LOC neck-LOC DE sweat-drop more
 tóng shènyǔ sì de, yìkēyìkē
 like heavy-rain similar DE drop-after-drop

zuān .76/.13 chūlái le .05/.03.
 pierce out-come

We recall that none of the respondents used the "Double-LE" construction in this clause. Furthermore, as the percentage figures indicate, only a small number of respondents inserted the sentence-final le at the end of the clause. The high percentage of -le can be accounted for, since the main verb, zuān 'pierce,' is monosyllabic. This is further reinforced by the avoidance of two homophonous LE's in the same clause, thus significantly reducing the use of the sentence-final le. Here we have an instance where a \$system which belongs to the phonological domain collaborates with another \$system which supposedly aims at achieving a euphonic effect. The collaboration of these two \$systems thus maximizes the use of the suffix -le and at the same time minimizes the use of the sentence-final le.

In the follow-up survey, with the sample in (4.32) serving as background information, three of the six subjects who inserted an obligatory -le after zuān and regarded the use of le as completely unnecessary in the first survey showed a drastic change in judgments. They opted for the non-use of the suffix but regarded the use of le as obligatory. This shows the significance of context in determining whether or not to use the sentence particle le. Le here serves as a boundary marker between topical units of different nature (i.e. foregrounding (the clauses in (4.7)) vs. backgrounding (the clauses in (4.32))). The insertion of

le, however, tends to rule out the use of the suffix -le. Semantically, directional complements tend to form a close-knit unit with the preceding verb. This is further reinforced by the avoidance of homophonous LE's within the same clause. Here is a case where expanded context (presumably a \$ystem in itself) forces the speaker to treat the discourse function of le (as a boundary marker between topical units) as an overriding \$ystem. This "Discourse" \$ystem (of le), in collaboration with the other two \$ystems, one being semantic in nature and the other for euphonic effect, thus rules out the three subjects' use of the suffix in clause (4.7f) in the follow-up survey.

However, the fact that the other three subjects inserted an obligatory -le in the follow-up survey suggests that native speakers vary with regard to which factors (\$ystems) are perceived as having primacy over others. This adds another dimension of complexity to the use of the particle LE in narrative discourse.

5.1.2 Conceptual Dynamism

We have observed several instances in which the use of the particle LE in narrative discourse is affected by the perceptual differences among native speakers. These differences range from (i) whether an expression is perceived as carrying classical flavor (thus the non-use/low percentage use of LE), (ii) whether the suffix -le should be

used to mark explicitly the anteriority of one event in relation to (an)other event(s) or simply left out for fear that its insertion would break up an integral whole, (iii) whether to treat a discourse-final clause as a commentary (thus the non-use of le) or as part of the main event line (thus the use of le as a discourse-final particle), to (iv) whether to treat a sequence of clauses as forming an indivisible discourse unit or capable of being further divided into smaller units of discourse (thus more uses of le).

Perceptual variation of this kind, unfortunately, is either totally neglected or conveniently labeled as "exceptions" by linguists who espouse a rigid and mechanical mode of language description. One way of handling such variation is to treat it as an independent system which interacts with other systems in determining the use of certain linguistic elements in a particular context. Another way to deal with such variation is suggested by Chu (1977). Chu proposes a dynamic view of language which recognizes variation in language as resulting from diverging concepts of the language users and seeks a way to describe such variation by building variables into linguistic theory. This approach, called "Conceptual Dynamism," provides a better explanation for several interesting linguistic phenomena. For example, the omission of the particle de in certain types of Mandarin construction (e.g. possessive,

attributive, and resultative) has been studied quite extensively, but no principled account has been given regarding what conditions the omission. As Chu convincingly demonstrates, the omission is possible only when the elements in these constructions can be construed as more closely related in meaning than those with a de between them. Compare, for instance, xiāngxiàde rén 'person in the countryside' and xiāngxià rén 'country folk (red-neck).' This kind of difference between the nominal phrases with and without de may be characterized as "conceptual closeness" and may vary from person to person and from style to style. For example, while the omission of de in chúfáng(de) yòngjù 'kitchen utensils' is in general considered stylistic, the same omission in ?chúfáng jiājù 'kitchen furniture,' if allowable, is individual variation. That is, if the speaker has in mind a typical kind of furniture associated with the kitchen and this kind sets itself apart from furniture used in other parts of the house, he may delete the particle to show the conceptual closeness of chúfáng 'kitchen' and jiājù 'furniture' (as opposed to the regular form chúfángde jiājù 'kitchen furniture').

The principle of "conceptual closeness" can be appealed to in explaining cases where native speakers show divergence in their use of LE in narrative discourse. For example, in sample (4.24), the author used only one le--at the end of clause (g)--to wrap up the entire news report. However,

over half of the respondents inserted le at the end of clauses (b) and (f) (81% and 54%, respectively), which represent the end of potential discourse blocks.³ This is a case where native speakers vary among themselves as to whether to treat a group of clauses as forming an indivisible whole or capable of being further divided into smaller topical units. The fact that only a small number of the respondents (20%) inserted le at the end of clause (g) further shows that native speakers may differ as to whether a discourse-final clause should be analyzed as an integral part of the main text (thus the use of le to conclude the passage) or as a commentary clause (thus the non-use of le).

Another case where the principle of "conceptual closeness" can be appealed to is clause (4.7a). The author used the suffix -le after the verb lǐng 'receive' to signal explicitly the anteriority of the event represented by the clause to the events that follow. However, for the majority of the respondents (66%), this use of -le is completely unnecessary. For these subjects, the verb lǐng 'receive' and the object qián 'money' together form a notional whole, so the use of -le in this clause is not favored.

Another important concept discussed in Chu (1977) is the notion of "continuum."⁴ From the principle of "conceptual closeness" mentioned above, native speakers may deduce an actual continuum over which particular expressions may be placed with regard to the degree of classical flavor

they carry. Such variation in judgments inevitably has a great impact on their use of the particle LE in narrative discourse. Take, for instance, the respondents' use of the suffix -le after the verbal compounds shíqǐ 'pick up' (4.1b), zhuāngrù 'put into' (4.4p), xiāoshì 'disappear' (4.5g), dīfǔ 'lower' (4.7e), and pàiqiǎn 'send.'⁵ These compounds in general are considered classical-flavored expressions, yet the respondents' use of -le with these compounds differ significantly: 17% after zhuāngrù, 29% after shíqǐ, 41% after pàiqiǎn, and 53% after xiāoshì and dīfǔ. The relatively high percentage of insertion after xiāoshì and dīfǔ involve other factors. For example, the status and usage of xiāoshì is indeterminate⁶ and the compound dīfǔ occurs in a clause which represents a peak event. On the other hand, the verbal compounds zhuāngrù, shíqǐ, and pàiqiǎn are similar in that they all occur in non-peak clauses of a discourse segment and carry some classical flavor. The divergence in the use of -le after these compounds thus suggests the existence of a continuum among these classical-flavored expressions, with zhuāngrù carrying "more" classical flavor and pàiqiǎn, "less" classical flavor. The compound shíqǐ stands somewhere in-between. This provides a more natural explanation as to why pàiqiǎn is more compatible with -le, shíqǐ is less compatible with it, and zhuāngrù, least compatible with the suffix.

5.2 Concluding Remarks

The present study shows that the verbal suffix -le serves as an explicit morphosyntactic signal for the peak event in a discourse segment. The requirement of -le with monosyllabic verbs shows another function of the suffix as a "realis" marker. Furthermore, -le is also used as an overt marker of anteriority when the verbs in a series of clauses are not cohesive enough and/or when a special emphasis is called for on the order of events. The sentence particle le serves as a discourse-final particle, marking the end of a discourse unit or the boundary between topical units. The factors which influence native speakers' use of the suffix -le and the sentence particle le are summarized at the beginning of this chapter. The interaction among these factors are examined within the framework of Integrative Linguistics, as proposed by Casagrande (1984a and 1984b). Perceptual variation among native speakers regarding whether or not to use LE in a particular context in fact results from the different applications of a common set of principles which govern the use of the particle. The differences in application depend on each individual speaker's organization of the discourse, his perception of the relatedness of events, and his world knowledge. Perceptual variation of this kind is best accounted for in terms of Chu's (1977) "Conceptual Dynamism."

The fact that there are a multitude of factors which interact to determine the proper use of a "small" lexical item such as the particle LE in narrative discourse shows the complexity involved in describing language. More importantly, it provides a stronger motivation for using methods of analysis provided by such approaches as Integrative Linguistics and Conceptual Dynamism, which enable investigation of the multiple functions of linguistic items with reference to their larger contexts.

5.3 Notes

1. "\$system" is used here to distinguish the technical use of the word system from its regular, non-technical use.
2. This is in fact an oversimplification. As we saw in Section 3.3.3, monosyllabic action/event verbs in Mandarin do not even presuppose an active attempt, and thus requires the use of -le, as a "realis" marker, to indicate the actual performance of the action. The requirement of -le with monosyllabic verbs thus involves semantic as well as phonological considerations, perhaps more of the former than the latter. This then is itself an instance of \$systems in collusion.
3. See sample (3.39) for a more detailed discussion of the author's use as opposed to the respondents' use of le in this passage.
4. This is comparable to Ross' (1972) "category squish." See Huang (1980) for an application of the "continuum" to some Chinese constructions.
5. See clause (e) of test sample (6) in the Appendix.
6. The compound also occurs in a clause representing an "anterior" event of a discourse segment. But this may not be a very significant factor.

APPENDIX I
TEST SAMPLES

Below are the eight test samples included in the survey:

- (1) a. Yìpáng, zǎo yǒu yíge zhànrshì, juǎnqǐ .41/.16
one-side early have one-M soldier roll-up
xiùzi
sleeves
- b. cóng lǎo bānzhǎng shēnpáng shíqǐ .16/.13
from old squad-commander body-side pick-up
shǒujù,
hand-saw
- c. bǐzhù .14/.15 yìkǒu dàqì,
close-up one-M big-breath
- d. xiàng lǎo bānzhǎng nèiyàng, shùnzhe
as old squad-commander that-manner along
.00/.00 huǒlǚ, sōu-sōu-sōu yòu pānshàng-le
fire-path whizz-whizz again climb-up
.64/.14 lièhuǒ fēitēng de mùpáijià
fierce-fire fly-gallop DE wood-scaffold
- e. búyihuǒr nài zhànrshì xiàng qiáoxià
in-no-time that soldier toward bridge-underneath
dà hǎn .00/.00 : "Pǎokǎi!"
loud yell run-away
- f. jiēzhe dèngchū .38/.08 yòujiǎo,
subsequently kick-out right-foot
- g. jiù tīng .09/.03 "kēbā" yìshēng,
then hear thump one-sound
- h. nèigēn huǒhóng de lìzhù, tuōzhe .03/.00 huǒ
that-M burning-red DE column drag-ZHE fire
shé, yītóu zǎi-le .94/.05 xiàlái.
tongue headlong fall down-come

'One one side, there was already a soldier who
rolled up his sleeves and picked up the hand-saw

from beside the old squad commander. The soldier took a deep breath, and (moving) along the fire lane, as the old squad commander did, he climbed, with the sounds "whizz-whizz," up the wooden scaffold, which was in a raging flame. In no time, the soldier shouted (in warning) to (people) underneath the bridge: "Stay back!" Subsequently, (he) kicked out with his right foot. Then there was (heard) a "thump" and the flaming-red column, dragging along the licking flame, fell headlong to the ground.'

- (2) a. Huá Lǎoshuān hūrán zuòqǐ .24/.15 shēn
Hua Laoshuan suddenly sit-up body
- b. cāzhe huǒcái
strike-ZHE match
- c. diǎnshàng .15/.15 biànshēn yóulà de dēngzhǎn
light-on whole-body grease DE oil-lamp
- d. chágǔǎn de liǎngjiān wūzi-lǐ biàn mǐmàn
tea-house DE two-M house-LOC then fill-with
-le .73/.09 qīngbái de guāng
green-white DE light
- e. "Xiǎoshuān de diē, nǐ jiù què ma?"
Xiaoshuan DE father you then go INTERROG
- f. shì yíge lǎo nǚrén de shēngyīn
be one-M old woman DE voice
- g. lǐbiān de wūzi-lǐ yě fāchū .34/.18 yízhèn késòu
inside DE room-LOC also issue-out one-M cough
- h. "Mm."
Mm
- i. Lǎoshuān yímiàn tīng yímiàn yīng yímiàn
Laoshuan at-once listen at-once answer at-once
kòushàng .14/.26 yīfu
button-up clothes
- j. shēn shǒu .06/.09 guòqù
stretch hand across
- k. shuō .00/.01 : "Nǐ gěi wǒ ba."
say you give I PART

1. Huá Dāmā zài zhěntou dǐxià, tāo-le 1.00/.00
Hua Dama at pillow underneath grope
bàn-tiān
half-day
- m. tāochū .20/.15 yìbāo yángqián
pull-out one-M silver-dollar
- n. jiāogěi .10/.19 Lǎoshuān
give-to Laoshuan
- o. Lǎoshuān jiē-le .98/.00
Laoshuan receive
- p. dǒudǒude zhuāngrù .08/.10 yīdài
tremblingly put-into pocket
- q. yòu zài wàimiàn àn-le .79/.11 liǎngxià
then at outside press two-times
- r. biàn diǎnshàng .10/.16 dēnglóng
then light-on paper-lantern
- s. chuīxí .23/.29 dēngzhǎn
blow-out oil-lamp
- t. zǒu xiàng wūzi-lǐ qù LE .79/.06
walk toward room-LOC go

'Hua Laoshuan suddenly sat up, (and) striking a match, lit the oil lamp completely covered with grease. The two rooms of the teahouse were then filled with a greenish-white light. "Are you going (now), Xiaoshuan's father?" It was an old woman's voice. The room inside also issued forth a cough. "Mm." Laoshuan, listening, answering, and buttoning up (his) clothing at the same time, stretched out (his) hand and said: "You'd better give (the money) to me." Hua Dama fumbled under the pillow for a long time (for the money), pulled out a packet of silver dollars, and gave (it) to Laoshuan. Laoshuan took (it) and nervously put (it) into (his) pocket and then pressed the outside (of the pocket) twice. Then (he) lit a paper lantern, blew out the oil lamp and walked toward the room inside.'

- (3) a. Hēizi de niáng shāoshāo chénmò-le .88/.03 yìhuǐr,
Heizi DE mother a-little silent a-while
- b. bǎ kuàngdēng dìgěi .24/.18 zhàngfū,
BA mine-lamp hand-to husband
- c. yòu zhǔfù shuō .03/.00 : "Míngtiān líng
then remindingly say tomorrow receive
bù líng miǎnfěn, dōu zǎo diǎr huílái."
not receive flour all early a-little return
- d. Shízhuàng jiē-le 1.00/.00 dēng
Shizhuang receive lamp
- e. mǎozhe fēngxuě
brave-ZHE wind-snow
- f. dàbùdi zǒu LE .85/.01
in-great-stride walk
- g. Hēizi de niáng yìzhí kànzhe zhàngfū xiāoshì-le
Heizi DE mother straight see-ZHE husband disappear
.49/.04 bèiyǐng
back-shadow
- h. cháng chōu-le .73/.10 yìkǒu qì
long draw-out one-M breath
- i. cái huídào .04/.10 wū-lǐ.
then return-to room-LOC

'Heizi's mother remained silent for a while.
(Then) she handed the miner's lamp to her husband.
Remindingly, she said: "Whether or not you get the
flour tomorrow, (try to) get back earlier."
Shizhuang took the lamp and walked away in a long
stride against the wind and snow. Heizi's mother
watched and watched until the sight of her
husband's back disappeared (in the distance). She
(then) took a deep breath and walked into the
house.'

- (4) a. Dì-èr-tiān wǔhòu, wǒ shàng yóujú qù
the-next-day afternoon I to post-office go
.00/.00 líng-le .15/.19 qián
get money

- b. zài tàiyáng shài-zhe de dàjiē-shàng zǒu-le .89/
at sun bask-ZHE DE big-street-LOC walk-le
.06 yǐhuǐr
a-while
- c. huǐr juéde shēng-shàng jiù línchū-le .54/.24
suddenly feel body-LOC then drip-out-le
xǔduō hàn lái
much sweat come
- d. wǒ xiàng wǒ qiánhòuzuǒyòu de xíng rén yí kàn .00/
I toward I around DE passer-by one-look
.00
- e. jiù bùzhībùjué bǎ tóu dīfǔ-le .51/.02 xiàqù
then unconsciously BA head lower-le down
- f. wǒ tóu-shàng jǐng-shàng de hànzhū, gèng tóng
I head-LOC neck-LOC DE sweat-drop more like
shèngyǔ sì de, yìkēyìkē zuān .76/.13
heavy-rain similar DE drop-after-drop pierce
chū lái le .05/.03.
out-come le

'In the afternoon of the following day, after I went to the post-office to get the money (i.e. to have the check cashed), I walked for a while on the sun-baked street. Suddenly I felt I was sweating all over. I took a look at the passers-by around me, and without realizing it, I lowered my head (feeling awkward). The beads of perspiration on my head and neck, much like a heavy rain, poured out in drops.'

- (5) a. "Quánjùde" zhèige diàn yú yījiǔwǔsì nián
Quanjude this-M restaurant at 1954 year
yījiǔwǔjiǔ nián xiān hòu zài Běijīng fánhuá
1959 year first after at Beijing prosperous
de Xī-Chángān-jīe hé Wángfǔjīng zēngshè-le
DE west-Changan-street and Wangfujing add-build-le
.60/.30 liǎngge fēndiàn .00/.00
two-M branch
- b. yījiǔqījiǔ nián sìyuè quán guó guīmó zuì dà
1979 year April whole country scope most big
de Běijīng Kǎoyā diàn qīcéng xīn
DE Beijing roast-duck restaurant seven-story new
lóu zài Hépingmén lùkǒu luòchéng LE
building at Hepingmen intersection complete LE
.71/.16

- c. jìnniánlái suízhe Zhōng-wài wénhuà
in-recent-years along Sino-foreign culture
jiāoliú shìyè de fāzhǎn, Běijīng Kǎoyā
exchange business DE development Beijing roast-duck
hé "Quánjùdé" diànào yě piāo .04/.15 yáng
and Quanjude store-name also float ocean
guò .04/.15 hǎi
cross sea
- d. chuándào .35/.23 guówài,
spread-to overseas
- e. zhèi jiù shǐ .00/.03 gèngduō de rén
this then make more DE people
chángdào-le .56/.28 sè-xiāng-wèi-měi de
taste-le smell-delicious-color-pretty DE
Běijīng Kǎoyā le .15/.04.
Beijing roast-duck le

'The Quanjude Restaurant opened up two branches on the prosperous West Changan Boulevard and Wangfujing Street in the years 1954 and 1959, respectively. In April of 1979, a new seven-story Beijing Roast Duck Restaurant, the largest of its kind in China, was built on Hepingmen Street. In recent years, as cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries develop, both Beijing Roast Duck and the fame of Quanjude Restaurant, crossing the seas and oceans, went abroad. This made it possible for more people to taste the delicious and splendid-appetizing Beijing Roast Duck.'

- (6) a. Jù shǐshū jìzǎi, yǒu-yìtiān yèlǐ
according-to history-book record one-day night
Han Míngdì mèngjiàn .25/.23 yíge jīn rén
Han Ming-emperor dream one-M gold man
zài gōngdiàn-nèi fēixíng
at palace-LOC fly
- b. zhèige rén miànmào fēifán, tóudǐng fàng
this-M man face-features unique head-top radiate
guāng
light
- c. dì-èr-tiān Míngdì wèn dàchén, zhè shì
the-next-day Ming-emperor ask minister this be
zénme yìhuì shì
how-come one-M matter

- d. yíwèi dàchén shuō .00/.01, nà shì fó de
one-M minister say that be Buddha DE
fá lì
power
- e. yúshì Míngdì biàn pàiqiǎn .10/.31 Cài yīn
therefore Ming-emperor then send Caiyin
hé Qínjīng liǎngge guānyuán dào .03/.00 Yìndù qù
and Qinjing two-M official to India go
.00/.00 qiúqǔ .00/.01 fójīng
search Buddhist-sutra
- f. tāmen zǒudào .23/.23 xiànzài Āfùhàn de yíge
they reach now Afghanistan DE one-M
dìfāng
place
- g. dédào-le .89/.05 fójīng hé fóxiàng
acquire-le Buddhist-sutra and Buddhist-statue
- h. liǎngge rén yòu jìxù .00/.00 qiánjìn
two-M person then continue move-forward
dào-le .89/.05 Yìndù
arrive-le India
- i. yāoqǐng-le .40/.21 gāosēng Jiāyèmóténg hé
invite-le high-monk Kasyapamatanga and
Zhúfǎlán yìtóng lái .00/.01 shǒudū Luòyáng
Dharmaraksa together come capital Luoyang
chuánshòu .01/.00 fójīng
teach Buddhist-sutra
- j. tāmen dàihuí .14/.20 fójīng yǐhòu,
they bring-back Buddhist-sutra after
- k. Míngdì wèi-le .81/.11 zhǔcháng zhèbù
Ming-emperor for preserve this-M
zhēnguì de fójiào jīndiǎn, biàn mínglǐng
precious DE Buddhism sutra-classic then order
.00/.01 gōngjiàng fāngzhào Yìndù fójiào sìyuàn
craftsman copy India Buddhism temple
de shìyàng
DE style
- l. xiūjiàng-le .70/.18 yìsuǒ sìyuàn
build-le one-M temple
- m. yóuyóu dāngchū cóng Yìndù dàihuí .00/.03 de
since originally from India bring-back DE
fójīng shì yòng bái mǎ tuó lái de,
Buddhist-sutra be use white-horse carry-back DE

suǒyǐ zhèsuǒ sìyuàn jiù míngmíng wéi Báimǎ
 so this-M temple then name as white-horse
 Sì
 temple

- n. Jiāyèmóténg hé Zhúfǎlán yě jiù zài zhèsuǒ
 Kasyapamatanga and Dharmaraksa also then at this-M
 sìyuàn-lǐ chuānshòu .03/.00 fójīng
 temple-LOC teach Buddhist-sutra
- o. cóngcǐ, Báimǎ Sì chéng-le .98/.01
 thereafter white-horse temple become-le
 Zhōngguó fójiao de fāyuándì.
 China Buddhism DE source

'According to historical records, one night the Ming Emperor of the Han Dynasty dreamed of a gold man flying in his palace. This man had unique facial features and had halo on his head. The next day, the Emperor asked (his) ministers what that was all about. One of them told him that Buddha was showing his powers. Thereupon, the Emperor sent two officials, Caiyin and Qinjing, to India to search for the Buddhist sutras. When they came to a place known today as Afghanistan, they found the sutras and statues. The two officials then moved on and arrived in India. They invited two high Buddhist monks, Kasyapamatanga and Dharmaraksa, to come (together) to the capital, Luoyang, to teach the sutras. After they brought back the sutras, the Emperor, in order to preserve these precious volumes, ordered his craftsmen to build a temple in the style of Indian Buddhist temples. Since the sutras were carried back on the back of white horses, the temple was named the "White Horse Temple." Kasyapamatanga and Dharmaraksa then taught the sutras in this temple. From then on, the temple became the source of Chinese Buddhism.'

- (7) a. Zhènián de qiūtiān, Shùshí zài Àozhōu de
 this-year DE autumn Shushi at Australia DE
 xiāzi shēngyì yǒu-le .94/.05 biānhuà,
 shrimp business have-le change
- b. jǐnjiēzhe gǎndào .09/.04 Shāwūdì-Ālābó
 immediately-after hurry-to Saudi-Arabia
 qù .00/.00 tán-le .54/.10 liǎngbǐ shēngyì
 go discuss-le two-M business

- c. yòu zài Běifēi hàodào .11/.09 guònián
then at North-Africa stay-to New-Year
- d. yì gǎndào .06/.03 Měiguó
as-soon-as hurry-to U.S.
- e. tā yǐjīng guòshì le .84/.05
she already pass-away le
- f. Bèiěr lǐng .08/.03 tā dào .13/.11 tāde mùdì
Bill lead he to her grave-site
- g. shuō .00/.00 tā huídao .15/.20 Měiguó yǐhòu
say she return-to U.S. after
- h. jiù xìn-le .72/.11 Tiānzhǔjiào .08/.04
then believe-le Catholicism
- i. yì-tiān-yì-tiān xiāoshòu .05/.01
day-in-day-out emaciated
- j. dào Shēngdànjié de shíhòu, yǐjīng bù-chéng-rén-
to Christmas DE time already not-as-human-
yàng le .85/.11.
shape le

'In fall of this year, Shushi's shrimp business in Australia underwent some change. Immediately after that, (he) hurried to Saudi Arabia to discuss two items of business. Then (he) stayed in North Africa until the Chinese New Year. As soon as (he) hurriedly arrived in the U.S., she (i.e. Shushi's former girl-friend) had already passed away. Bill led him to her grave (site) and said that after she returned to the U.S., she became a Catholic. (But) as the days went by, she grew more and more emaciated. When Christmas came, she was (so thin and so weak that she looked) like a skeleton.'

- (8) a. Zuótiān wǒ gēn yíge péngyou dào hǎibiān qù
yesterday I with one-M friend to seashore go
.00/.00 wán .03/.05
play
- b. yīnwèi fēng tài dà .11/.24 wǒmen zhǐ wán
because wind too great we only play
.63/.16 shífēnzhōng jiù huílái .81/.05
ten-minute then return-come

- c. huí .03/.13 jiā yǐhòu méi duōjiǔ Lǎo Wáng
 return home after not very-long old Wang
 lái .94/.02
 come
- d. tā qǐng .01/.04 wǒmen qù tā jiā chī fàn
 he ask we go he home eat food
- e. zhèngzhǎo wǒmen dōu juéde yǒu yìdiǎr è .21/.13
 just-then we all feel have a-bit hungry
 jiù qù Lǎo Wáng jiā chī .10/.03 fàn .05/.03
 then go old Wang home eat food
- f. chīwán .19/.29 fàn zuò .65/.18 yìhuér jiù
 eat-finish food sit a-while then
 huí lái .83/.05.
 return-come

'Yesterday, a friend and I went to the seashore to play. Because the wind was too great, we only played ten minutes and then returned. Not long after we returned, Lao Wang came. He asked us to go to his home to eat. Just then we all felt a little hungry and then went to his house to eat. After we finished eating, we sat awhile, and then returned.'

APPENDIX II
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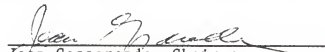
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Vincent Wu-Chang Chang was born on November 28, 1953, in Taichung, Taiwan, the Republic of China. After receiving the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English from the National Taiwan Normal University in July, 1975, he taught at a senior high school in Taipei City for one year. From 1976 to 1978, he served as an ensign in the Chinese Navy. In September 1978, he was employed as a teaching assistant at the Department of English, National Taiwan Normal University, and worked there until August, 1980. In September, 1980, he enrolled in the Program in linguistics at the University of Florida and received his M.A. degree in Linguistics in August of 1982.

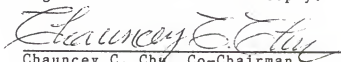
In the fall of 1982, he was admitted to the Ph.D. Program in linguistics. He served as a graduate teaching assistant in the Program for three years (Summer 1982-Summer 1985). From fall 1985 to spring 1986, he taught Beginning Chinese at the University.

He married Cherry Ing Li of Yilan, Taiwan, in 1978. They have a daughter, Amy, born in 1983 in Gainesville, Florida.

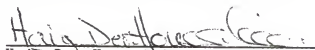
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Jean Casagrande, Chairman
Professor of Linguistics

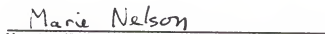
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Chauncey C. Chu, Co-Chairman
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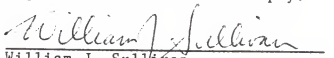
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


Haig Der-Houssikian
Professor of Linguistics

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Marie Nelson
Associate Professor of English

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.


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This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Program in Linguistics in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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